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45 years of global hits

EXCLUSIVE

Anastacia

Her epic new album, iconic fashion and big 25th anniversary plans!

‘I haven’t done something this creative in a long time...’

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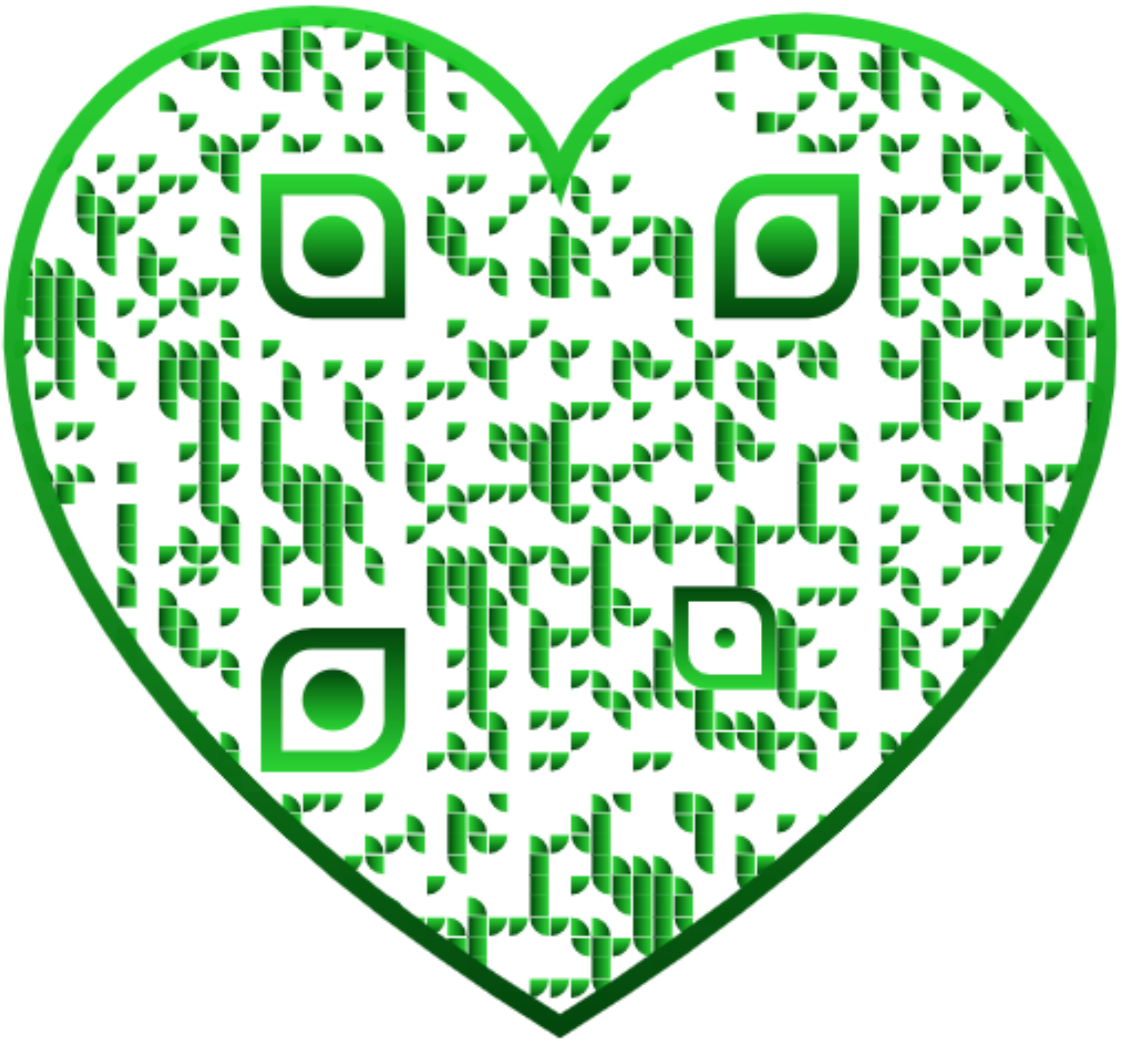

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FLASHBACK

JAY ASTON

With her solo albums available digitally for the first time, **Jay Aston** looks back on life after leaving Bucks Fizz!

As one-quarter of Bucks Fizz, Jay Aston landed a run of hit records throughout the 1980s, launching with the Eurovision-winning anthem *Making Your Mind Up* and leading to chart-toppers *The Land Of Make Believe* and *My Camera Never Lies*, along with classics such as *Piece Of The Action*, *When We Were Young* and *I Hear Talk*.

Four albums in and with ever-growing tension and band politics, the then-24-year-old exited the line-up in 1985 following a coach crash that left her hospitalised, but her transition to post-Fizz life wasn't easy.

"I had a lot of litigation and it was awful. I won all of my cases but lost everything I owned - literally, the shirt off my back," Jay sighs. "It damaged me and that's probably why I've been so reticent to put anything out, because I really had a love-hate relationship with music. It was my passion - and it had been since I was a kid - but then I had a really nasty experience and I was burnt from it."

It didn't hinder her creativity, however, and in the years that followed, through the tough times, she continued to work on material for solo albums that would never truly get off the ground. "I'd been writing since I left the band in 1985 and had all these songs around, so I just thought, 'It's time to put them out'," adds the singer-songwriter of her latest releases, 'Alive And Well' and 'I-Spy', both of which finally made their digital debut last month.

The former did materialise officially back in the early 2000s, but its release coincided with Jay's pregnancy with her daughter Josie, so promo was minimal and, within five years, she was reunited with Cheryl Baker and Mike Nolan for the TV show, 'Pop Goes The Band', which led to her rejoining the group, with which she continues to this day.

But the recordings, which are worlds away from the shiny Bucks Fizz brand of pop and lean into various influences - from Kate Bush, David Bowie and Genesis, to opera and classical music that her dad would play around the family home - as the young musician attempted to reestablish her place in the world.

"I couldn't quantify what this has cost me in terms of time and money - when I got my publishing deal in the '90s, I spent every penny of it on recording more songs," she chuckles. "I literally was like a homeless person; sofa surfing on my girlfriends' sofas for years and recording these songs. It was weird because I wanted to keep writing new songs but I was really scared to do anything with them, so these projects just stayed in my head.

"I can't put a price on it, other than that I could probably have had a couple of other houses if I hadn't spent the money on the albums," Jay laughs - noting the irony that, in those wilderness years, she considered a career change as a financial advisor. She trained, but "realised it was the most boring job on the planet" and gave up soon thereafter.

Listening back to the material now, she calls the projects a testament to her "genuine passion and love for music". "I do love the power of the English language to convey emotions and thoughts and feelings," Jay smiles, "and some of them have got a bit of a political edge as well. Some of them are about my frustration with how things have been screwed up here, over the decades, through politics and mismanagement. But I come from a band that was known as being squeaky clean, so it was hard for the industry - even when I got my publishing deal - to get their heads around the girl from Bucks Fizz writing songs like the *Pigs Are On The Cake* or *Sorrow's Wedding*."

She found herself collaborating with another chart-topper who had been through the music industry ringer herself; Jay's sister-in-law, Shakespears Sister's Marcella Detroit, appears as a co-writer on a number of tracks, which originated in the period after she was ousted from the duo. "That was very difficult for her and I think we were both a bit damaged by what happened to us," Jay reflects. "But hey, she's still knocking out albums today!"

As is Jay, who released The Fizz's latest album, 'Everything Under The Sun', back in 2022, and the trio will return to indigo at The O2 for another headline gig this summer. The solo releases, she says, are an added bonus.

"I had mouth cancer five years ago and I think I realised that pursuing gigging solo stuff isn't going to happen," Jay admits. "So for anybody that's interested in my work as an artist, rather than being a member of Bucks Fizz, they might find this of interest. Because there's always been a good fan base around the band and they're always interested in what we're doing - they know more about me than I do!" **RP**

● ***'Alive And Well' and 'I-Spy' are out now. The Fizz play indigo at The O2 on June 28. Tickets are on sale now.***

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

RETROPOP

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HEY THERE!

There are few voices in pop as distinctive as Anastacia's - and almost 25 years since her debut, she's never sounded better!

Back with a brand new album ahead of what's set to be a massive milestone year for the star, it was a thrill to catch up with the vocal powerhouse and style icon herself on a rainy Thursday afternoon in Kings Cross.

Diving deep into her record, 'Our Songs', and reflecting upon her career so far, I'm so excited to have Anastacia as this month's cover star!

Also in this issue we have exclusive chats with the fabulous Rebecca Ferguson, who tells all about her new album and tour, along with UB40 on their 45th anniversary, Dee C. Lee on her stellar return to the studio and Starsailor on their epic new LP.

We also catch up with Billie Ray Martin for a trip down memory lane to her Electribe 101 days, A1's Ben Adams talks about his new musical and Bucks Fizz legend Jay Aston offers up a treasure trove of material from across the decades and looks back on the band's bitter breakup.

Indulging in the spirit of awards season, we get a look in at all the action from the Grammys and celebrate this year's Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame nominees, before bringing you all the highlights from this year's Record Store Day releases.

As always, there's loads more inside - take a look if you don't believe me - and we've so much coming up over the next few months that I'm *so* excited about. It's gonna be a great year for pop!

For now, dive into this month's issue and I'll see you again next time...

Connor

Connor Gotto, Editor
@MrConnorGotto

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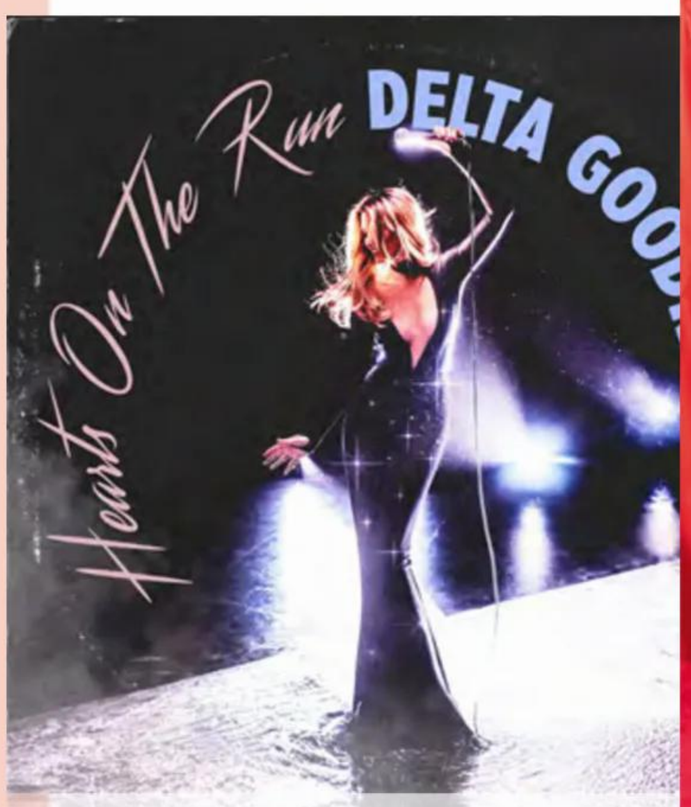

RETROPOP PLAYLIST

The latest releases from your favourite **RETROPOP** artists - all in one place!

PET SHOP BOYS - *Loneliness* (Parlophone)
Collaborating with James Ford on the lead single from their latest album, Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe return with a lush disco-inspired jam tapping into themes of social isolation.

DELTA GOODREM - *Hearts On The Run* (ATLED)
Another storming '80s-inspired anthem from the Aussie powerhouse, her latest single adopts a Don Henley-esque soundscape with an uplifting lyric about living heart-first.

GWEN STEFANI & BLAKE SHELTON - *Purple Irises* (Warner)
The power couple once again joins forces on a loved-up, guitar-driven ode to their bond and life together, set to feature on the No Doubt star's forthcoming solo album.

DANNII MINOGUE & AUTONE - *Thinking 'Bout Us* (Central Station)
A stellar return from the Queen of the Clubs who teams up with the Australian DJ on an all-out banger, celebrating self love and independence with that trademark Minogue sparkle.

CROWDED HOUSE - *Oh Hi* (BMG)
The lead single from the New Zealanders' upcoming album is inspired by Neil Finn's support of So They Can, a non-profit focused on building schools in remote parts of Kenya and Tanzan.

BEYONCÉ - *Texas Hold 'Em* (Columbia)
The first of two tracks lifted from 'Act II' of the superstar's 'Renaissance' project, the country-leaning single is a sure-fire sign of the direction of the latest instalment in the trilogy.

ARIANA GRANDE - *Yes, And?* (Republic)
A fierce house anthem from the pop superstar, the lead single from Grande's new LP draws on influences such as Madonna's *Vogue* and Beyoncé's *Break My Soul*.

DUA LIPA - *Training Season* (Warner)
The follow-up to *Houdini* is once again produced by Tame Impala's Kevin Parker and Danny L Harle, with a lyric inspired by the star's mediocre dates as she denounces her unimpressive suitors.

SIA & KYLIE MINOGUE - *Dance Alone* (Atlantic)
An all-Australian powerhouse collaboration, Sia and Kylie trade verses on the pair's first work together since 2014's 'Kiss Me Once', lifted from the former's forthcoming album.

PETER WILSON - *Imagine That* (Energise)
Written by Michael Jay (Five Star, Martika) and produced by Jeff Vincent (Madonna, Nik Kershaw), the punchy pop anthem is the lead track from the Aussie star's upcoming album 'Touch'.

HOW TO LISTEN

Scan the QR code and check out all the **RETROPOP** *playlists in one place, over on Spotify!*

Top Of The Pops *tales*

Step back in time as we revisit classic moments from the 'Top Of The Pops' archives!

#23

THE GRID PRESS FOR SUCCESS

June 30, 1994: The Grid – *Swamp Thing*

When it comes to the weirdest instrument ever seen on 'Top Of The Pops', The Grid – Richard Norris and Soft Cell's Dave Ball – surely take the prize, for exploring the musical potential of the Corby trouser press.

Supported by members of their live band, the electronic duo made three appearances to promote banjo-dance hit *Swamp Thing*, roping in Elton Jackson – well known in Manchester for working the door at The Haçienda's gay night Flesh – to deliver the vocals. A trouser press emblazoned with the phrase CORBYDELIC debuted in the second, drummed by percussionist Pablo Cook.

It was, Norris tells us, the latest phase of an in-joke/obsession originated by Stevo Pearce, owner of Soft Cell's label Some Bizarre. "We were working with Marc Almond and Stevo was involved. One day, Stevo went in to see Rob Dickins, Warner's head of A&R, and he mentioned that Stevo's trousers weren't properly creased. So this became one of the points of Marc's deal with Warner."

Stevo had eccentric demands inserted into Almond's contract. "Six six-foot Bugs Bunnys was one, and the other was a Corby trouser press. And it had to be a particular model, where you get a little brass plate with your name engraved. Just to get Rob Dickins' back up!"

As a touring group, The Grid were also used to seeing the devices in hotel rooms. "It came to a head when we were staying at the Adelphi in Liverpool," Norris explains. "It had a telly, and then the Corby trouser press, lit up in this alcove in the corner. We stopped watching the telly and started thinking about the trouser press, and were going, 'We've got to get in touch with Corby. We need to bring it into our act.'"

The company's PR person was enthusiastic. "They had a tie press as well and were going, 'You could use this as a fake wah wah pedal.' So we got loads and took them on 'Top Of The Pops' as part of Pablo's drum kit."

The third performance saw The Grid sharing the studio with up-and-comers Oasis. What Norris calls "a bit of argy-bargy" almost ensued... "We were dressed in white suits and cowboy hats, and I don't think Liam was particularly keen on it," he recalls. "Elton knew Noel from clubbing, so he was sitting with him in the canteen getting on fine. Then Liam came over, looked him in the face, went 'Shit dance band!', and walked off.

"I know Pablo and Liam almost had a set-to," Norris laughs. "Words were had!" **RP**

● ***Richard Norris's memoir 'Strange Things Are Happening' is out March 21. Follow @TOTPFacts on Twitter for live trivia commentary on the BBC Four repeats.***

WORDS IAN BERRIMAN **PHOTOS** BBC / TOP OF THE POPS

TOP 10
THE OFFICIAL CHART FOR JUNE 26, 1994

1 WET WET WET
Love Is All Around

2 ALL-4-ONE
I Swear

3 THE GRID
Swamp Thing

4 BIG MOUNTAIN
Baby I Love Your Way

5 DAWN PENN
You Don't Love Me (No, No, No)

6 ACE OF BASE
Don't Turn Around

7 REEL 2 REAL FEATURING THE MAD STUNTMAN
Go On Move

8 THE PRODIGY
No Good (Start The Dance)

9 ASWAD
Shine

10 CAPPELLA
U & Me

LINE-UP NEWS

BST HYDE PARK BAGS KYLIE & SHANIA

Kylie Minogue and Shania Twain are the latest names to be announced as this year's BST Hyde Park headliners.

The *Padam Padam* hitmaker will headline the July 13 edition of the festival, with a support line-up to be announced.

"I can't wait to return to BST Hyde Park this summer," she says. "My last appearance at this iconic event was in 2015 and it was a truly unforgettable experience. So excited to see you all again!"

Kylie joins previously-announced BST headliners Kings Of Leon (June 30), Andrea Bocelli (July 5), Robbie Williams (July 6), and K-pop stars Stray Kids (July 14), plus country-pop royalty Shania Twain (July 7), who was also added to the billing last month.

It's one of six huge gigs announced by the *Man! I Feel Like A Woman* singer, launching June 27 at Belsonic in Belfast, Northern Ireland, ahead of stops in Dublin, Stirling, Lytham St Annes, and Chepstow.

"When it rains... it pours," said Shania in an announcement. "UK & IRELAND – I'm coming for you, see you this Summer!"

For further details and purchase links, visit our website.

PHOTOS ERIK MELVIN, LOUIE BANKS

50 years of Waterloo

ABBA will celebrate 50 years since the release of their second album, 'Waterloo', with a series of reissues.

Five decades since the group achieved their international breakthrough on the back of their Eurovision Song Contest win, Agnetha Fältskog, Björn Ulvaeus, Benny Andersson and Anni-Frid Lyngstad are revisiting the LP for their latest release.

The album will be reissued as a Half Speed mastered 45RPM 2LP Vinyl, along with a limited edition box set of the three vinyl singles originally released by Polar in 1974. The singles are also available as separate picture discs.

To top it all off, there is a unique 10" vinyl disc featuring Waterloo in four different languages, along with a new line of anniversary apparel taking it back to the '70s.

To celebrate the release, for one night only on April 4 Up at The O2 is giving fans the chance to dance along to ABBA's hits on the roof of London's iconic O2 arena, against the backdrop of London's skyline.

For further details and purchase links, visit our website.

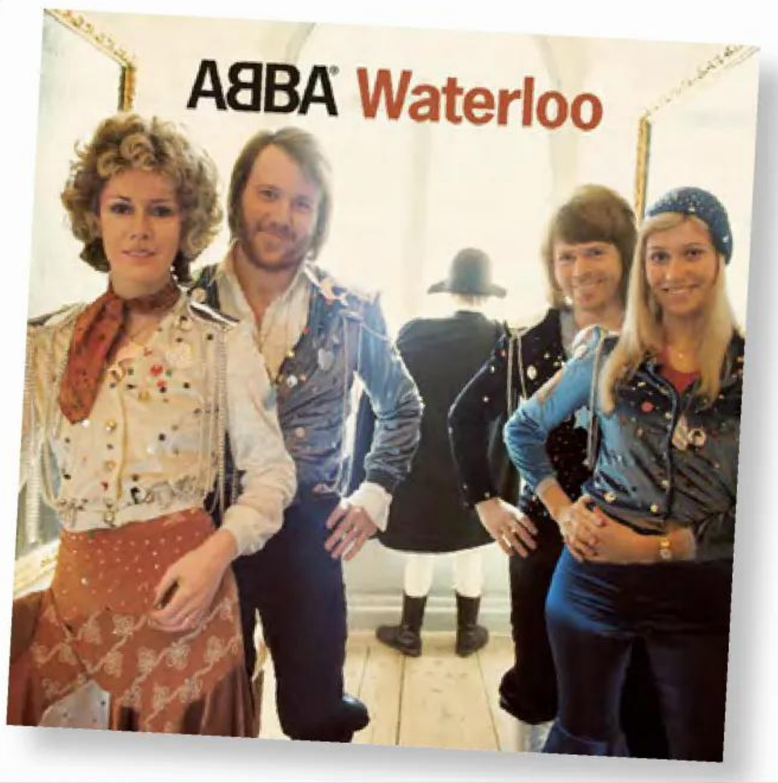

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

IN THE LOOP

SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTOR has announced her largest headline show to date as part of the On The Mount at Wasing concert series

LULU's April tour - marking her 60 years in music - will be her live farewell

BBC Radio legend **STEVE WRIGHT** has died aged 69

DANIEL BEDINGFIELD is eyeing a pop comeback alongside his 20th anniversary UK tour

BEYONCÉ ANNOUNCES RENAISSANCE ACT II

Beyoncé announced part two of her 'Renaissance' trilogy during the Super Bowl.

The US superstar appeared at the end of the ad for communications giant Verizon to tease the release, saying: "Okay, they ready. Drop the new music."

Immediately after the advert aired, Beyoncé released two new songs – *Texas Hold 'Em* and *16 Carriages* – across digital platforms.

Both are set to feature on her new album, 'Act II', which is expected to lean into the country genre.

The first instalment of Beyoncé's 'Renaissance' project was released in July 2022 with the LP winning her a record-breaking 32nd Grammy.

The following year, she embarked on the 'Renaissance World Tour', which was later released as a concert movie in cinemas worldwide.

For further details and purchase links, visit our website.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

STEPS MUSICAL SETS NOVEMBER PREMIERE

A musical based on Steps' iconic hits will get its world premiere in November.

Titled 'Here & Now', the show is set to feature all of the group's classics, including the chart-toppers *Stomp*, *Heartbeat* and *Tragedy*, along with fan-favourites such as *One For Sorrow* and *Deeper Shade Of Blue*, and more recent cuts like *Scared Of The Dark* and *What The Future Holds*.

It follows the workers of a 'seaside superstore' and will be written by Shaun Kitchener, with production from the band themselves as well as theatre company ROYO and pop legend Pete Waterman.

"We've been lucky to do many things together as a band, but the question we get asked again and again is, 'Where is the Steps musical?'," says the group. "Well... it's finally here and we couldn't be more excited.

"We've searched for the perfect story for our music and we've found it in the aisle of a seaside superstore where four friends set out on their own *Summer Of Love*".

They add: "It's a story of friendship, romance and community; packed with our biggest hits and sure to have everybody laughing, crying and dancing in the aisles.

"We can't wait to open the doors later this year, and see you there!"

'Here & Now' is set to premiere at The Alexandra in Birmingham from November 9-24. For further details and purchase links, visit our website.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

JENNIFER LOPEZ says 'This Is Me... Now' could be her last album

GLADYS KNIGHT has added extra shows - including a second Royal Albert Hall show - to her UK farewell tour

NO DOUBT's Coachella reunion isn't expected to lead to new music

JACK SAVORETTI is set to release his first Italian language album, 'Miss Italia', on May 10

Celine Dion documentary on the way

A new Celine Dion documentary has been announced by Amazon MGM.

The film, titled 'I Am: Celine Dion', will spotlight the singer's recent health struggles, with Emmy-winning director Irene Taylor helming the project.

According to a press release, the film spans the course of one year and sees the *Think Twice* star open up about her personal life and experience with the rare neurological disorder, stiff-person syndrome, with which she was diagnosed in 2022.

"This last couple of years has been such a challenge for me, the journey from discovering my condition to learning how to live with and manage it, but not to let it define me," says Celine.

"As the road to resuming my performing career continues, I have realised how much I have missed it, of being able to see my fans. During this absence, I decided I wanted to document this part of my life, to try to raise awareness of this little-known condition, to help others who share this diagnosis."

"Celine Dion is a global megastar with a career defined not only by her extraordinary work ethic and passion, but by her dedication to her fans," adds Jennifer Salke, head of Amazon MGM Studios.

"This documentary is a raw, intimate portrayal of a pivotal time in her personal life and career, pulling back the curtain on her journey as she overcomes an unthinkable diagnosis. It's an honour to be trusted with her story, and we can't wait to share it with Prime Video audiences around the world."

A premiere date has yet to be announced.

PHOTO FEELING PRODUCTIONS INC.

RICK ASTLEY READIES FIRST MEMOIR

Rick Astley will release his first-ever memoir, 'Never', on October 10.

The *Never Gonna Give You Up* hitmaker's tome will revisit his life and career, from his early years in Newton-le-Willows, Lancashire, to finding global success as part of Stock Aitken Waterman's Hit Factory and his more recent renaissance, including the new album 'Are We There Yet?'.

Astley says in a synopsis: "Fame didn't actually make me happy. I was an insecure twenty-year-old and being famous made things worse. It was an era all about the way you looked and I still don't know how I squeezed through. I did enjoy myself for a lot of it, but, at some point, you're looking in the mirror and going: 'Is this it, then?'

"Clichéd as this sounds, success is never going to mend something that is broken. You just have to work that out for yourself. And something was a bit broken in me – I think it is with almost everybody who gets on the stage."

According to a bio, the book goes "beyond the blinding lights of the stage – giving an intimate look at the man behind the hits – and is a portrait of truth, artistic evolution and the astounding power of contentment".

For further details and purchase links, visit our website.

PHOTO PETER NEILL

IN THE LOOP

CHAKA KHAN will curate the 2024 Meltdown festival at London's Southbank

TAYLOR SWIFT will release her new album, 'The Tortured Poets Department', on April 19

SUGABABES received the Impact Award at 2024 MOBOs

LILY ALLEN has written over 50 songs for her forthcoming fifth album

PHOTO CLYDE GATES

TEXAS & SPOONER OLDHAM JOIN FORCES

Texas have teamed up with American songwriter and pianist Spooner Oldham for their first joint album, 'The Muscle Shoals Sessions'.

Due March 29, the album was recorded at the renowned Fame Recording Studio in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, during the summer of 2022, and features twelve of Texas' greatest hits reimagined.

Also included are two covers – *Would I Lie To You* by Charles and Eddie and *Save The Last Dance* by The Drifters – stripped back to their bare bones, guided by the soulful voice of Sharleen Spiteri, accompanied by Oldham's delicate piano lines.

Spiteri says of the experience: "To have the option to go to Muscle Shoals to record was like being a little kid in a sweet shop. Working with Spooner was inspiring, fun and he's just a wonderful human being.

"The fact that Northern Soul music has been such a massive influence for Texas made the fit with Spooner just right. Him writing *Keep On Talking* was essential to us recording it for this album."

On adapting the tracks for the album, she continues: "To reimagine the classics and break them down so you hear the clarity in the lyrics – it may give you a different take and a different feeling on these songs.

"It's just vocal and a piano with some beautiful backing – all recorded live. I think you're going to get something quite different from what you will have heard on the original versions."

It comes ahead of the group's UK arena tour in September, which will see the band play arenas across the country.

For further details and purchase links, visit our website.

THE CORRS ANNOUNCE UK TOUR

The Corrs are back with an eight-date UK and Ireland tour set to hit the road this November.

Named after their second studio album, 'Talk On Corners' (1997), the group will perform tracks from the acclaimed album plus a selection of their greatest hits.

Kicking off at Belfast's SSE Arena before heading to Manchester's AO Arena, Glasgow's OVO Hydro and Newcastle's Utilita Arena, they'll be joined by Natalie Imbruglia for the run.

Alongside the dates, the group will also release 'Talk On Corners' on vinyl for the first time ever, with more details to come.

For further details and purchase links, visit our website.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

MADONNA secured a landmark 64th UK Top 10 single with her 2023 single *Popular* with **THE WEEKND** and **PLAYBOI CARTI**

YOU ME AT SIX will split following their 2025 farewell tour

MARIAH CAREY is celebrating 'The Emancipation Of Mimi' with 'The Celebration of Mimi' Las Vegas residency

KESHA has a date marked in her calendar when she's "free" to release new music following Dr Luke legal battle

LINE-UP NEWS

Shaznay Lewis turns a new page

PHOTO KATY GORNIAK

Shaznay Lewis will release 'Pages' – her first solo album in 20 years – on May 17.

Having teased the project with the lush lead single, *Miracle*, the All Saints legend has shared details of her forthcoming long-player.

Clocking in at 12 songs, the album features collaborations with Self Esteem on *Pick You Up*, and Shola Ama and General Levy on *Good Mourning*.

"I do feel as though I'm starting again, and making this record with some special people has been an exhilarating experience," says Shaznay. "I felt free for the first time.

"For this album, myself and the people I worked with were making it for one reason only: to just make music that we felt was good, and for people to take and enjoy.

"You need to be in the right place and clear headspace to create good work and finally, I had that."

In support of the release, Shaznay will play a headline show at London's Jazz Cafe on May 14, marking her first full solo gig in 20 years.

"I'm excited to be doing my first ever show at the legendary Jazz Cafe, I'm looking forward to sharing this special night with music lovers performing songs from my album 'Pages'," she adds.

For further details and purchase links, visit our website.

Pet Shop Boys are back

Pet Shop Boys will release their new album, 'Nonetheless', on April 26.

The LP is the 15th from the synth-pop duo and was recorded by Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe in 2023 with producer James Ford.

"We wanted this album to be a celebration of the unique and diverse emotions that make us human," says the duo. "From the more dance-orientated tracks to the raw poignancy of the introspective ballads, with their beautiful string arrangements, each track tells a story and contributes to the overall narrative of the album."

Alongside the album announcement, PPet Shop Boys have released the lead single, *Loneliness*, across formats.

Speaking to Zoe Ball on the BBC Radio 2 Breakfast show, Neil added of the song: "*Loneliness* is the last track we wrote for the album. Chris sent me this very beautiful track over. And I already had this, probably inspired by the lockdown situation, this lyric about loneliness which fitted with it very well. And, it's quite an up sounding song with a lyric that starts off sad but it turns around at the end."

Over the summer, they'll play a five-night run at London's Royal Opera House between July 23 and July 27.

For further details and purchase links, visit our website.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

IN THE LOOP

GARY BARLOW wants to use virtual reality in **TAKE THAT**'s next tour

BILLY JOEL has released *Turn The Lights Back On* - his first new single in 17 years

SHAKIRA will release her Spanish-language album 'Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran' on March 22

A TV series based on **USHER**'s music is in the works at Universal

EUROVISION SONG CONTEST
MALMÖ 2024

OLLY ALEXANDER GETS DIZZY

Olly Alexander has sent Eurovision fans into a spin with the United Kingdom's 2024 entry *Dizzy*!

The Years & Years star will perform the track, which is out now, in Malmö in a bid to better last year's 25th place finish with Mae Muller's *I Wrote A Song*.

Having teased only a snippet of the track, fans were quick to champion the singer, insisting it's a "Eurovision winner for sure" that's "gonna go straight into my playlist".

On the pulsing electronic tune, he sings: *'So won't you make me dizzy for your kisses / Will you take my hand and spin me / Round and round until the moment never ends.'*

The song lives up to his promise that his Eurovision entry was "not a ballad" and would be "electronic, something you can dance to".

It was co-written by Alexander and Danny L Harle, who has produced hits for Dua Lipa, Chic and Charli XCX.

Turn over for all the latest from Malmö 2024

PHOTO XXXXXXX XXXXXX

LATEST ACTS CONFIRMED FOR MALMÖ 2024

AUSTRIA

PERFORMER: Kaleen
AGE: 29
SONG: *We Will Rave*
DID YOU KNOW: Last year, she supported Austria, Armenia, Germany, and Georgia with their stage performances at the Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool!

DENMARK

PERFORMER: SABA
AGE: 26
SONG: *Sand*
DID YOU KNOW: SABA was adopted from Ethiopia when she was just eight months old and has roots in the West Jutland town of Ringkøbing!

ESTONIA

PERFORMER: 5miinust & Puuluup
SONG: *(Nendest) narkootikumidest ei tea me (küll) midagi*
DID YOU KNOW: The title of the song translates as *We (sure) know nothing about (these) drugs* and was written by both acts!

FINLAND

PERFORMER: Windows95man
AGE: 38
SONG: *No Rules*
DID YOU KNOW: The visual artist's home videos on YouTube began to circulate all over the world and one even ended up in a commercial aired during an NHL game!

GERMANY

PERFORMER: Isaak
AGE: 28
SONG: *Always On The Run*
DID YOU KNOW: With prior experience in 'The X Factor Germany', Isaak later won the talent show 'Show Your Talent' in 2021!

IRELAND

PERFORMER: Bambie Thug
AGE: 30
SONG: *Doomsday Blue*
DID YOU KNOW: Bambie is a prolific songwriter with amassed streams of 60 million on music written for other artists!

ISRAEL

PERFORMER: Eden Golan
AGE: 20
SONG: TBA
DID YOU KNOW: Eden started performing on stage from childhood as an artistic dancer!

ITALY

PERFORMER: Angelina Mango
AGE: 22
SONG: *La Noia*
DID YOU KNOW: Angelina became the first female to win the Sanremo Music Festival in 10 years!

LATVIA

PERFORMER: Dons
AGE: 39
SONG: *Hollow*
DID YOU KNOW: Dons is an accomplished Latvian musician, having released nine albums to date and won multiple Music Recording Awards!

LITHUANIA

PERFORMER: Silvester Belt
AGE: 26
SONG: *Luktelk*
DID YOU KNOW: Silvester graduated from the University of Westminster in London with a degree in Commercial Music Performance!

LUXEMBOURG

PERFORMER: TALI
AGE: 23
SONG: *Fighter*
DID YOU KNOW: TALI will be Luxembourg's entry to the Eurovision Song Contest in over three decades!

MALTA

PERFORMER: Sarah Bonnici
AGE: 25
SONG: *Loop*
DID YOU KNOW: In 2009, she participated in the finals of the JESC (Malta Junior Song Contest) with *The Mambo Song*!

MOLDOVA

PERFORMER: Natalia Barbu
AGE: 44
SONG: *In The Middle*
DID YOU KNOW: The rock and pop singer has previously represented Moldova at the Eurovision Song Contest in 2007, with the song *Fight*, and finished 10th!

NORWAY

PERFORMER: Gåte
SONG: *Ulveham*
DID YOU KNOW: Launching in the early 2000s, the band sold more than 100,000 albums and won the Spellemann Award 2002 for Best Newcomer!

POLAND

PERFORMER: Luna
AGE: 25
SONG: *The Tower*
DID YOU KNOW: Luna can play the violin and the piano, is a songwriter (in both English and Polish) and a composer, as well as a yoga teacher!

SPAIN

PERFORMER: Nebulossa
SONG: *Zorra*
DID YOU KNOW: The duo's song *Glam* was chosen as Best Song of 2021 by the Indie Cool jury!

UKRAINE

PERFORMER: alyona alyona & Jerry Heil
SONG: *Teresa & Maria*
DID YOU KNOW: The duo topped the public vote and narrowly beat Ziferblat (who won the overall jury vote) and returning Eurovision Song Contest participant Mélovin!

As **Madonna** revisits 40 years of success with her global 'Celebration Tour', the hosts of the Inside The Groove podcast explore how she became an icon and the most successful solo female recording artist on the planet!

INSIDE THE GROOVE

● *For more Madonna, listen to Inside The Groove wherever you get your podcasts.*

CONFESSIONS ON A DANCE FLOOR

RELEASED: **November 2005**

'American Life' may have failed to match the sales of previous albums, and a backlash against her anti-war stance had certainly not helped, but Madonna remained in a defiant mood.

Able to put her political messages more eloquently during the 'Re-Invention Tour', the cameras once again followed her as she performed around the globe, and whilst she and Swedish filmmaker Jonas Akerland worked on the pictures for a new documentary, her musical director Stuart Price mixed the music. They even wrote some new tracks including a rocky number called *I Love New York*.

Madonna was also writing with long term collaborator Patrick Leonard on a potential musical, as well as composing for another project with French director Luc Besson. Neither of these came to fruition, but before long Madonna had accumulated dozens of new songs with nowhere to place them.

Having been asked by the pop icon to create a track that sounded like "ABBA on speed", Price had prepared a backing track that sampled the Swedish Band's 1979 single *Gimme! Gimme! Gimme! (A Man After Midnight)*. Madonna came up with a killer melody on the spot and soon realised this was the direction she needed to take for the next album.

With Price now on board to produce the majority of the album, he reworked songs recorded with other producers and even remixed their *New York* track to take on a sound that was simultaneously retro and progressive and unashamedly dance.

Sneaking in some references to his heroes, the Pet Shop Boys, Price's production owed more to '80s electro-pop than '70s disco, but its sound was lighter and more carefree than anything Madonna had recorded since *Vogue*. Indeed, Madonna was keen to discuss how much fun she had recording it in Stuart's home studio, sitting on a broken chair while working in a similar routine as she had created her earliest hits.

Heavily promoted as Madonna's first record on the new Apple platform iTunes and with a special bundle deal for Motorola phones, *Hung Up* was an instant hit and was followed by a second UK No. 1 with *Sorry*.

The album wasn't received quite so well in the US and beyond *Hung Up* there was little radio play for the singles. However, 'Confessions' remains an all-time fan favourite - for some, this would be the ultimate point in her career.

Madonna had first worked with photographer Steven Klein for 2004's X-STaTIC PRO=CeSS shoot for W magazine and the pair teamed up again to shoot the cover art for 'Confessions' with art director Giovanni Bianco. Using a disco ball as a prop, the images would be heavily reworked before the final selection – turning Madonna's hair a darker orange and recolouring her yellow top to pink.

HARD CANDY

RELEASED: **March 2008**

'Hard Candy' would be Madonna's final album for Warner Bros., some 25 years since her self-titled debut.

Sessions for the album began shortly after the 'Confessions Tour' was complete and Madonna had originally planned to record with Pet Shop Boys - who had remixed the single *Sorry* - but ultimately took another, more urban direction, possibly to counter her lack of airplay on US radio.

Taking inspiration from Justin Timberlake's 'FutureSex / LoveSounds' (2006), produced by Timbaland, and the singer's previous album 'Justified' (2002), produced by The Neptunes, Madonna sought to create an album that offered simpler arrangements to 'Confessions' and put the focus onto groove and melody.

Having recorded a handful of tracks with Pharrell Williams, she then reached out to Justin Timberlake himself and brought him on board as a co-producer.

Madonna had suffered from early leaks of her music before, but when a track called *Beat Goes On* surfaced on the internet in the summer of 2007, the project was still very much in its infancy. The song would be heavily re-worked and was re-recorded at the end of the year, this time also featuring Kanye West.

The first official airing of 'Hard Candy' came in the form of lead single *4 Minutes*, which was released a few weeks ahead of the album. A duet with Timberlake, it featured big synth brass samples and vocals from producer Timbaland. Whilst many fans and some critics felt Madonna was now following a trend instead of leading, it was an instant success.

4 Minutes would not only reach No. 1 in over 20 countries, including the UK and US, but it proved that even on the eve of her 50th birthday, Madonna still held the right to be called the Queen of Pop.

At one point, the singer planned to call the album 'Black Madonna' in reference partly to her new urban direction and also referring to religious iconography from 14th century Europe. Steven Klein shot cover artwork with the singer's face covered in black makeup and red lips, but soon after the project was retitled 'Give It 2 Me' - now with a boxing theme - and Madonna was pictured in boxing gloves against retro-themed posters. Timbaland's track of the same name put paid to that, so it was reconfigured to reflect the new 'Hard Candy' title. Suffering as a result, the cover art probably ranks as her weakest.

WORDS EDWARD RUSSELL, JONATHAN PRYCE & PETER FALLOON **PHOTO** ALBERTO TOLOT

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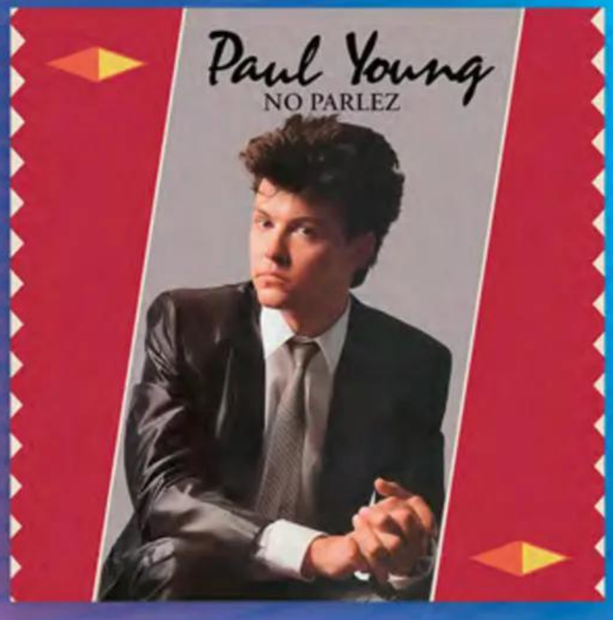

Paul Young: No Parlez (Blu Ray Audio/2CD)

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ON STAGE

BEN ADAMS ON POLICE COPS: THE MUSICAL

A1 star **Ben Adams** is enjoying being this side of the stage lights as 'Police Cops: The Musical' plays in London through next month!

One of the biggest boy bands of the late 1990s and early 2000s, A1 first burst onto the scene with 1999's incredibly catchy *Be The First To Believe.* More huge hits followed for Ben Adams, Paul Marazzi, Christian Ingebrigtsen and Mark Read in the ensuing three years, including the No. 1s *Take On Me* and *Same Old Brand New You* before they split to pursue solo careers in 2002.

There have since been reunions and reformations. They released two albums as a trio ahead of Paul's return to the fold in 2017 and there were a couple of new singles as a foursome.

Now Ben Adams promises new music is on the way. "We actually have a lot of songs sitting on the shelf ready to go," the singer explains. "We all live in different places now so it's just a matter of us putting our heads together and coming up with a plan to start releasing them."

But for now Ben is busy with the London return of 'Police Cops: The Musical', which played to sold-out houses last year and for which he wrote the score. "I think it's the most ridiculous thing you've ever seen," he laughs about the show, which charts the hilarious antics of the Police Cops comedy troupe in 1980s America. "There are laugh-a-minute shows but I would say this is probably a laugh every ten seconds. You couldn't pack more jokes into a show if you tried. Everybody comes out thinking that it's the craziest thing they've seen and probably the most stupid as well."

Adams is no stranger to musical theatre. He and writer-director Chris Wilkins co-wrote the equally hilarious 'Eugenius!', which has attained cult classic status since premiering in 2016. He's also working on some other shows "that are in their baby stages with other producers and are more musical theatre" so the process is very different for the man who co-wrote the likes of *Summertime Of Our Lives* and *Caught In The Middle*.

"But because 'Police Cops' has that '80s sound, it wasn't actually that different to writing pop music," adds Ben, who is now based in Norway. "I wrote the music at home and sent it over to them to do whatever they wanted with it. The next time I heard it, it had sort of taken on its own life and its own path, with them adding their brilliant comedy. It was like making a cake, putting layers upon layers upon layers, with them sending it back to me and me sending back another version."

He's been in musicals himself, including 'The Rocky Horror Show', 'Flashdance' and 'We Will Rock You', but the multi-hyphenate is happy to be behind the scenes. "I love being on the creative side and it's a very different kind of joy for me because normally I'm on stage, looking out at people in the audience. With theatre I get to sit out there myself, soaking up the atmosphere and letting everybody else do the hard work."

Doesn't the performer in him miss being on stage? "No - because I'm performing all the time, whether it's with A1 or musicals or whatever. So when I'm sitting there watching a show I'm enjoying every second of not having to do the hard graft of being on stage night after night for eight shows a week."

Adams *was* on stage at the Eurovision Song Contest in 2022 representing Norway but fans might not have known it was him at first. Singing novelty song *Give That Wolf A Banana* as part of the group Subwoolfer, his face was hidden under a mask.

The song made it to 10th place in the contest, which surprised Ben. "We wrote the most ridiculous song we could possibly think of," he laughs, "and we made up this crazy story about two wolves from the moon, not thinking for a second that we'd get through. Plus we were in masks so no-one knew who we were. It was mad."

He'll be back on stage with Paul, Christian and Mark for the '90s Baby Festival in Manchester this July and says of the band: "A1 is like the gift that keeps on giving. We started 25 years ago and we still tour constantly. It's amazing to have started something that long ago - I mean, I was 16 when we began - and to still have a career doing it." RP

Police Cops: The Musical is at Southwark Playhouse Elephant, London, until April 20. For tickets visit policecopsmusical.co.uk. For A1 tour dates visit a1official.com.

WORDS SIMON BUTTON **PHOTO** COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

TAKE IT OFF!

Having wrapped its fifth series last month, 'The Masked Singer UK' winner, McFly's **Danny Jones**, and runner-up, 'Fame Academy' alum **Lemar**, open up on their stint on the Saturday night TV favourite!

WINNER DANNY JONES AKA PIRANHA

You are the winner of the 'The Masked Singer'. How does it feel?
It feels surreal. Everything about this show and everything about what I've just done is completely surreal! I have become a Piranha, and no longer Danny Jones!

How hard is it to keep this a secret?
Very hard and even more so now I've won. It's been really difficult because I get excited by stuff very easily and I'm all in when I do something. I'm meant to be on tour. It's been very difficult, but that's part of the fun, isn't it?

Do you think that the band will be surprised when they find out you're Piranha?
I think that the boys [in McFy] will be very surprised. I am my own worst enemy, so I'm always like, "That wasn't very good", so they always build me up. They'll guess me straight away.

What do you think of some of the panel's guesses, everything from Tom Grennan, to James Morrison, Donnie Wahlberg and Elton John!
They're all amazing, good guesses. I genuinely thought they would have got me a lot sooner. I think the clues may have put the panel off. There's been a few panelists that I've known. They know my voice. I'm happy with getting compared to Tom Grennan, Brandon Flowers and James Morrison. You know what I mean? I'm happy with that!

How weird is it not knowing who your co-stars are?
Very weird! Not knowing who my co-stars are is very weird. You're obviously always trying to guess or get a sneak look, but it's not possible!. Even though you may know them, if you put someone behind a mask, you second guess yourself anyway. So even when I was watching at home last year, with Charlie [Simpson, who won series four as Rhino] I was like, "It's not him!" You're second guessing yourself. It was a fun game to play!

RUNNER-UP LEMAR AKA CRICKET

Why did you decide to take part in 'The Masked Singer'?
I'm a fan of the show. I like the show. I like the characters, I like the fun content of it. Once I realised I could be creative and do whatever songs I wanted, I thought yes lets jump straight in! I didn't think I'd last that long [on the series] if I'm honest, maybe two or three weeks, but I managed to wiggle it through to the final.

We had some interesting guesses from the panel, Tom Hanks, Seal,

Mr Motivator, Stuart Broad, how did you feel about those guesses?

I was laughing, it gave me quite a bit of humour along the way. My name kept coming up a lot so I thought, 'ahhh I don't know how much longer I'll be able to keep this up as they've guessed me.' I'm happy that I've got to the final.

When Olly Murs guessed you, were you worried?

When I was told Olly [Murs] was on the panel, I thought, "We've known each other for years, he's 100 percent going to get me."

What were your favourite things about performing as Cricket?

It's like an alter ego, you get to come out and be fun. You can interact with the kids in the audience. I had a lot of fun doing that. Luckily singing wasn't too hard in the costume. It's quite an experience singing and doing certain notes with something right in front of your face so that was a challenge and the heat inside the costume was immense, but apart from that it was good fun!

How weird is it not knowing who your co-stars are?

It's strange but also it makes it easier as you choose the songs that you are singing and you go out and sing them, you don't know what anyone else is singing.

Who of your costars are you most looking forward to seeing unmasked?

All of them. Dippy Egg and Bigfoot, when they walked past, would give hugs, Maypole and Rat. I'd like to see who they are as well. I really liked Rat's energy.

Rita Ora called you the most seductive Cricket. How do you feel about that?

I'll take that. I don't know how you make this costume cool but I gave it a try!

PHOTOS ITV

ALSO ON THIS SERIES OF THE MASKED SINGER UK

MAYPOLE is...
Pussycat Dolls legend
MELODY THORNTON

AIR FRYER is...
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KEALA SETTLE

EIFFEL TOWER is...
'80s icon TIFFANY

WEATHER is...
Soul legend
DIONNE WARWICK

CHICKEN CAESAR is...
Top 10 charting singer/actor
ALEXANDER ARMSTRONG

QUICK READ

STILL GOING STRONG

Introducing their new album 'Gravity Stairs', **Crowded House**'s latest project is the culmination of almost 40 years together!

Neil Finn's history dates back long before Crowded House; the New Zealander joined Split Enz in 1977 after the departure of founding member Phil Judd and navigated the band's shift towards new wave pop, scoring hits like *I Got You*, *One Step Ahead*, *History Never Repeats*, and *Message To My Girl* in the process.

Following their 1984 split, he helped form Crowded House and served as the band's lead singer and principal songwriter, crafting mid-'80s hits like *Don't Dream It's Over* and *Something So Strong* that set the standard for jangle pop in the era.

Now, the band returns with 'Gravity Stairs' - their first new release since 2021's 'Dreamers Are Waiting' and eighth overall, produced by the band with Steven Schram and showcasing the current line-up — Finn, Nick Seymour, Mitchell Froom, and Finn's sons Elroy and Liam — as musically adventurous and still capable of reaching the staggering highs that have made them an international favourite.

It's the act of climbing those figurative "gravity stairs" - inspired by a heavy stone staircase near where Finn holidays - that he likens to his own mindset as a creator. "It's a metaphor for getting a little older and becoming aware of your own mortality, your own physicality," Finn says. "Things are getting a little harder, and there's more determination needed to get to the top, but there's still the same compulsion to climb them."

It's a process he describes in *Magic Piano*, which opens the album and marked one of the first songs the band — whose members currently reside in four different countries — attempted to work up in rehearsals ahead of their recording sessions for 'Gravity Stairs', which took place in Australia, New Zealand and California. The second day they played it, it suddenly clicked.

> **'GRAVITY STAIRS' IS A METAPHOR FOR GETTING A LITTLE OLDER AND BECOMING AWARE OF YOUR OWN MORTALITY, YOUR OWN PHYSICALITY**
>
> **NEIL FINN**

"It was a very different song when we started playing it. It was probably ambitious because it's not a simple song — it's got a lot of twists and turns," Finn says. "But the aim is to produce something that sounds effortless, as if it was the most obvious thing in the world and that it's always existed like that. That's the art of record making."

Other songs on 'Gravity Stairs' do that while showcasing various aspects of the band's sound, such as the Britpop-leaning *Life's Imitation*, channeling a longing for connection written during the most isolated parts of the Covid lockdown.

"It's about trying to achieve some reality and being aware that connection is hard to make," he says. "And even before Covid, it was hard to find closeness to people. That became particularly acute afterward."

Themes of connection and love pop up in several places on 'Gravity Stairs'. *All That I Can Ever Own* examines impermanence through child rearing and property under threat by rising waters, but in Finn's typical optimistic style by the time it reaches its conclusion, it's arrived at something that sounds like jubilation. "There's an awareness that you can't really control the outcomes of what happens

when you love someone," he says. "Throughout your life there's an element of letting go of anything other than the love you feel for somebody."

The singer-songwriter borrowed from his father's war diary for *Some Greater Plan (for Claire),* drawing on a memory of a whirlwind romance in Italy for a melody that's both seductive and emotional. "It was always a thing that came up. Dad would have this wistful look in his eye when he would talk about Italy," Finn recalls. His brother Tim makes an appearance on the track, which is dedicated to a friend who's no longer with us. Equally cinematic, the mysterious *Black Water, White Circle* peers through the world of dreams into the afterlife.

Meanwhile, the lead single *Oh Hi* has a particular significance to Finn, who reflects upon his philanthropy with So They Can, an international nonprofit focused on building schools in remote parts of Kenya and Tanzania, in a lyric that celebrates the strength of the young people he's met throughout that experience. "I'm hoping the song comes across without needing to know the backstory," he says, "but it's very much inspired by these incredible kids and their magnificence."

'Gravity Stairs' is bookended by a second song about the joys and agonies of creating; *Night Song* is almost like a waking dream, slipping into different rhythmic patterns and arrangements as it unfolds and following the siren call of creation that reached out to Finn via a voice on the streets outside of his hotel room that made its way up to his window and sparked inspiration. He began to record and uses the audio footage on the record, with the unknown man's words influencing the lyric.

"That was inspired by a guy I heard outside my hotel window at three in the morning. He was ranting and saying amazing things," Finn says. "You share that part of the night with people who are on his kind of trip. I felt a strange kinship with him." That anonymous voice is the last sound on 'Gravity Stairs' and his wondrous exclamation is familiar in a way to Finn, who's experienced his share of late nights trying to unlock the magic of a composition.

"People will certainly relate to the idea that no matter what you're thinking about at two in the morning, it feels like obsession," he says. "And when I'm working on songs, that's the reality: I'm going to bed with a tune going round in my head, and I'll wake up with a tune going round in my head."

It all makes for an album rooted in the challenges of life in the present day, both as artists and for the wider population of global citizens, but if one thing's for sure it's that Finn and Crowded House will prevail, scaling those "gravity stairs" once more and, in doing so, showcasing their evolution and commitment to delivering thought-provoking and inspiring sounds that resonate with fans old and new. **RP**

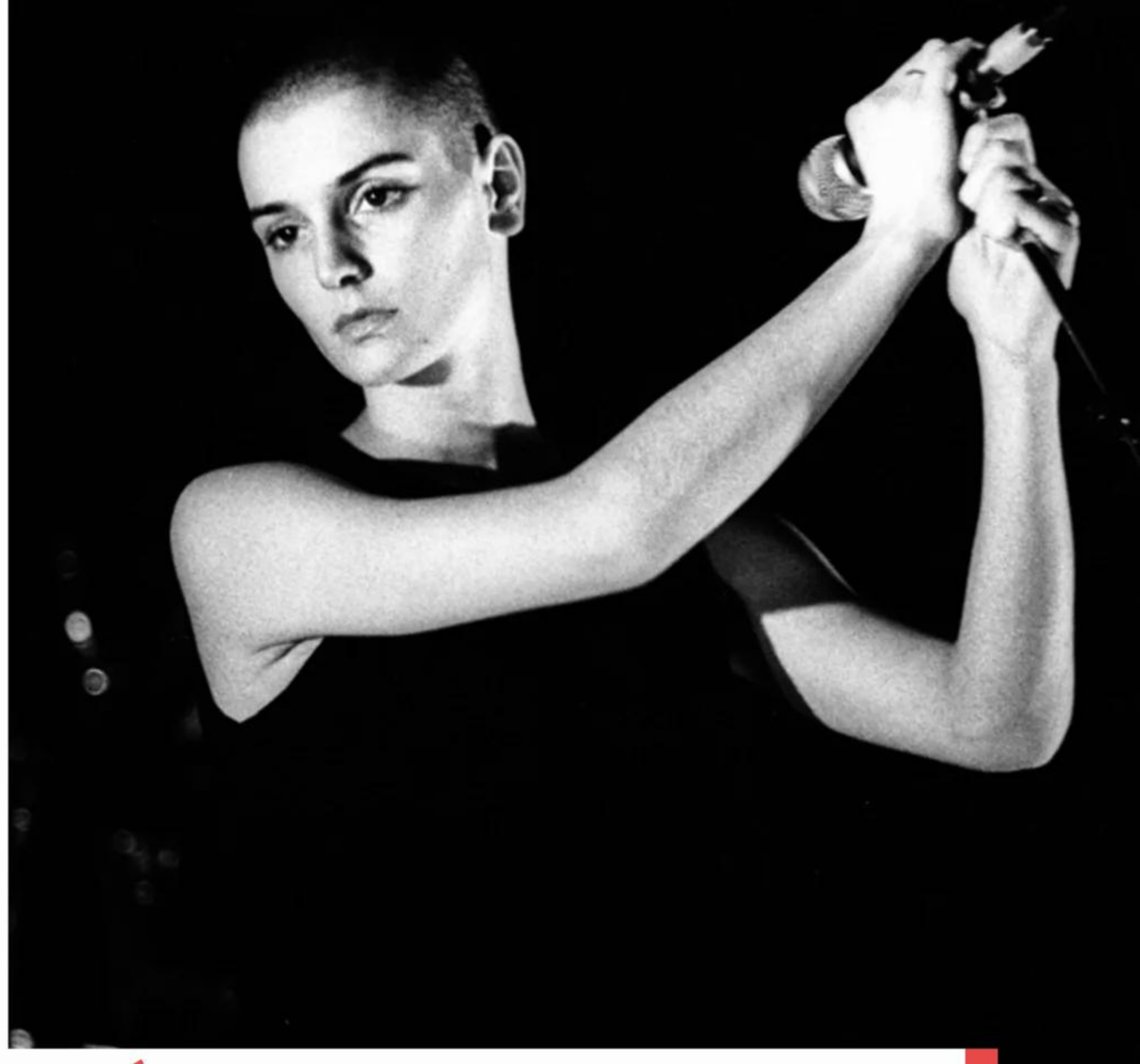
● ***'Gravity Stairs' is out May 31 on BMG.***

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

CHER

An artist so iconic she needs only one name, Cher has used her distinctive voice, stage presence, and avant-garde fashion to achieve unprecedented success while blazing a trail for women performers. A musician who personifies female creative freedom in a male-dominated industry, Cher is the only woman to have a No. 1 hit on a Billboard chart in each of the past seven decades.

NOMINEE: Cher



SINÉAD O'CONNOR

Nothing compares 2 Sinéad O'Connor. The life and art of this Irish singer-songwriter and activist left an indelible mark on the soul of popular music. Musically, she combined stylistic elements from alternative rock, hip-hop, reggae and electronic pop to punctuate and enhance her socio-political messages. With a distinctive multifaceted voice and a striking presence that challenged traditional views of femininity, O'Connor was ahead of her time expressing her unrepentant rage and sorrow over then-taboo subjects like women's rights, organised religion, child abuse and oppression.

NOMINEE: Sinéad O'Connor

STANDING IN THE HALL OF FAME

With voting open for the Class of 2024, take a look at the 14 stars nominated for induction into the **Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame**!

The Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame Foundation has announced the acts nominated for induction this year.

Ten out of 15 of the nominees are on the ballot for the first time, including **Mariah Carey**, **Cher**, **Foreigner**, **Peter Frampton**, **Kool & The Gang**, **Lenny Kravitz**, **Oasis**, **Sinéad O'Connor**, **Ozzy Osbourne** and **Sade**.

Also featured is **Mary J. Blige**, **Dave Matthews Band**, **Eric B. & Rakim** and **Jane's Addiction**.

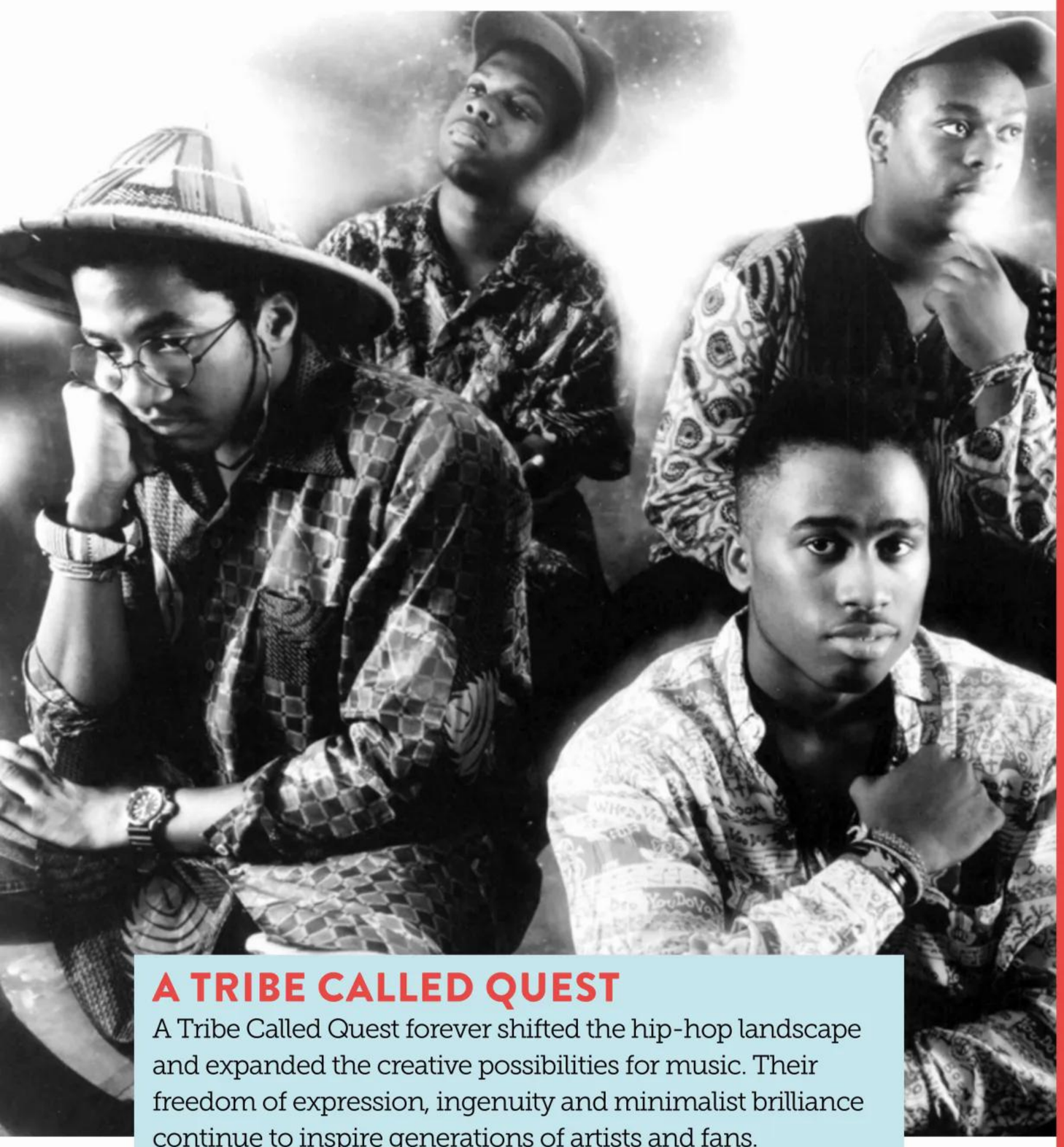
To be eligible for nomination, an individual artist or band must have released its first commercial recording at least 25 years prior to the year of nomination.

"This remarkable list of Nominees reflects the diverse artists and music that the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame honours and celebrates," says John Sykes, Chairman of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Foundation.

"Continuing in the true spirit of Rock & Roll, these artists have created their own sounds that have impacted generations and influenced countless others that have followed in their footsteps."

Inductees will be announced in late April. The Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame 2024 Induction Ceremony will take place in Cleveland this autumn with date and on-sale information to be announced.

The 2024 ceremony will once again stream live on Disney+ with a special airing on ABC at a later date and available on Hulu the next day.



A TRIBE CALLED QUEST

A Tribe Called Quest forever shifted the hip-hop landscape and expanded the creative possibilities for music. Their freedom of expression, ingenuity and minimalist brilliance continue to inspire generations of artists and fans.

NOMINEES: Ali Shaheed Muhammad, Phife Dawg, Q-Tip, Jarobi White

MARY J. BLIGE

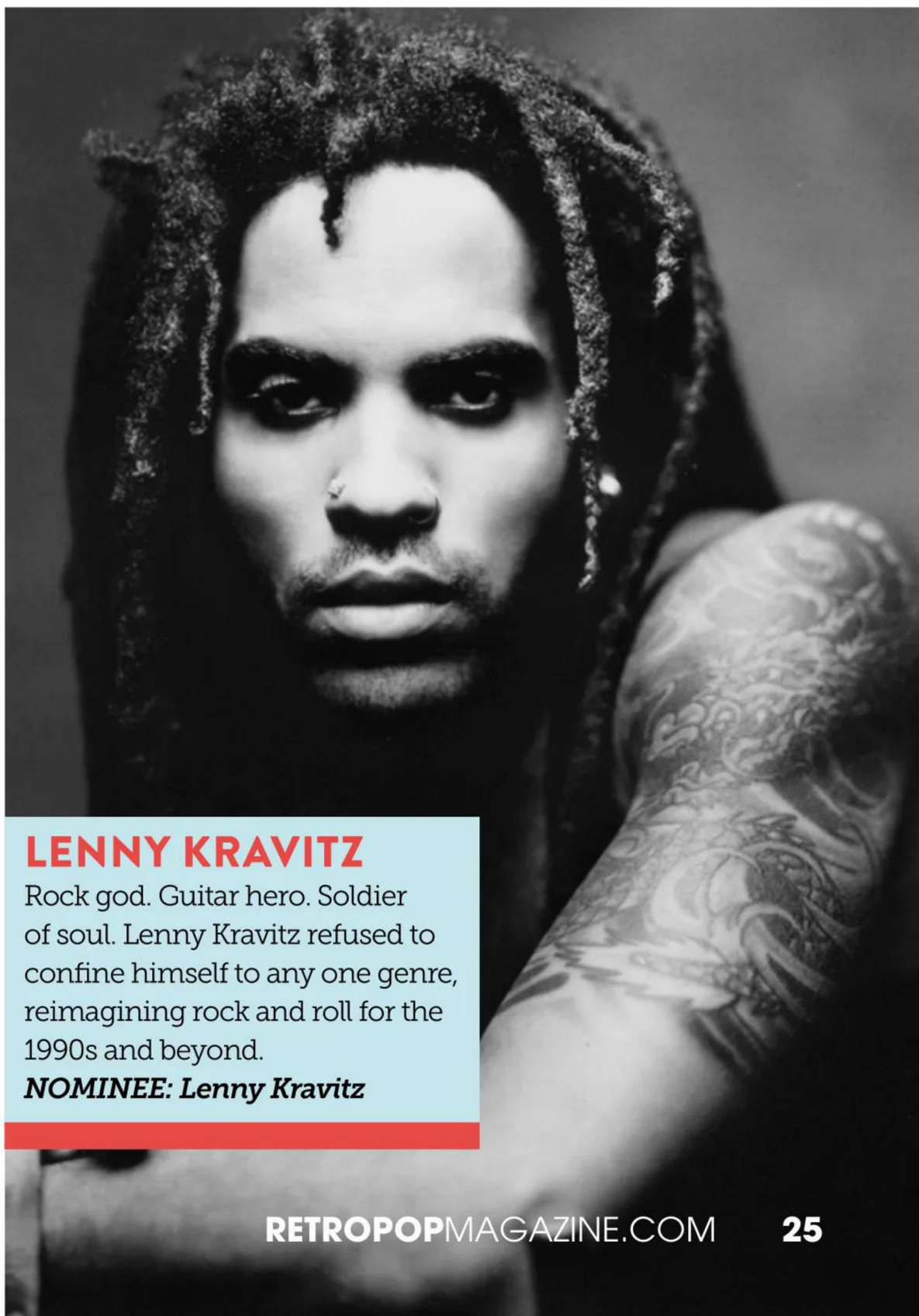
The Queen of Hip-Hop Soul, Mary J. Blige flipped the R&B world on its head. Her anthems of resilience and empowerment have inspired a legion of loyal fans while influencing virtually every R&B artist of the last 20 years, including Aaliyah, Beyoncé, Mariah Carey and SZA. Her career dominance reveals impressive longevity – 14 US Top Ten studio albums, nine Grammys and over 50 million albums sold.

NOMINEE: Mary J. Blige

OZZY OSBOURNE

Ozzy Osbourne is rock's beloved Prince Of Darkness, a key architect of heavy metal and one of the most successful solo artists of all time. Ozzy's voice is instantly recognizable – haunting, powerful, raw, sincere – and capable of conveying a wide array of emotions. As a live performer, he is a force of nature, with onstage charisma and showmanship unlike any other. Ozzy brings theatricality to his electrifying performances, captivating audiences with his magnetic energy and rightly earning the title Godfather of Heavy Metal.

NOMINEE: Ozzy Osbourne



LENNY KRAVITZ

Rock god. Guitar hero. Soldier of soul. Lenny Kravitz refused to confine himself to any one genre, reimagining rock and roll for the 1990s and beyond.

NOMINEE: Lenny Kravitz

SADE

With a career spanning four decades, Sade have blended jazz, soul and R&B to create a sound that's all their own – laid-back rhythms, elegant arrangements, melodic saxophone lines and, of course, the smooth, sultry, mesmerizing vocals of their lead singer Sade Adu. As the musical landscape around them changed, Sade's music has endured – their songs of love, life and loss resonate with listeners on a deeply personal level. Sade's six studio albums have sold over 50 million copies, earned countless critical accolades and built an extremely loyal fanbase.

NOMINEES: Sade Adu, Paul Spencer Denman, Andrew Hale, Stuart Matthewman

DAVE MATTHEWS BAND

Supported by a communal fanbase, Dave Matthews Band harnessed an eclectic sound and relentless touring schedule to become one of the biggest bands in the world – and they have continued to pick up new generations of fans along the way. Dave Matthews Band are one of the top-selling live acts of all time, and they are the only band with seven consecutive albums debuting at No. 1 in the US.

NOMINEES: Carter Beauford, Jeff Coffin, Stefan Lessard, Dave Matthews, Leroi Moore, Tim Reynolds, Rashawn Ross, Boyd Tinsley

KOOL & THE GANG

For over fifty years, Kool & the Gang have been essential innovators of funk, soul, disco, and R&B, creating rock and roll's most danceable anthems. They are one of the grooviest and most sampled bands of all time, with a recognizable sound that resonates across generations and has brought joy to millions of fans around the globe.

NOMINEES: Robert 'Kool' Bell, Ronald Bell, George Brown, Robert 'Spike' Mickens, Claydes 'Charles' Smith, James 'J.T.' Taylor, Dennis 'Dee Tee' Thomas, Ricky Westfield

PETER FRAMPTON

Passionate songwriter, exceptional guitarist and cultural touchstone, Peter Frampton is one of few musicians who can evoke an image of rock and roll stardom with three simple words: "Frampton Comes Alive!"

NOMINEE: Peter Frampton

JANE'S ADDICTION

Jane's Addiction thrust subversive, underground sounds into the mainstream, blazing the trail for Soundgarden, Nirvana and other alternative artists. Formed in 1985 in Los Angeles, Jane's Addiction rejected extravagance and made their own rules, creating an energy-filled concoction of punk, glam, metal, and art that shook up the Sunset Strip hair metal scene.

NOMINEES: Eric Avery, Perry Farrell, Dave Navarro, Stephen Perkins

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME

MARIAH CAREY

The indisputable Songbird Supreme. Everything Mariah Carey touches turns to gold. With her five-octave vocal range and revolutionary riffs and runs, her voice is incomparable. As a singer, songwriter, performer, and record producer, her dynamic career trajectory has had an enormous impact on the pop music landscape, generating 19 US No. 1 hits, second only to The Beatles.

NOMINEE: Mariah Carey

ERIC B. & RAKIM

During hip-hop's golden age in the 1980s, Eric B. & Rakim expanded the genre with unprecedented levels of rhyming, word interplay, and soulful beats. While high-energy party anthems dominated the scene, Eric B. & Rakim brought a smoother, more poetic approach to the musical landscape. With their innovations, they earned the respect and admiration of peers and fans. As JAY-Z acknowledged in 2017, the duo's lyric *'constant elevation causes expansion'* is a mantra that every artist should live by, and it sums up the massive legacy of Eric B. & Rakim's work.

NOMINEES: Eric B. & Rakim

OASIS

Oasis reclaimed big, brash, fun rock and roll with their anthemic sound, cool swagger, expertly crafted lyrics and electrifying live performances. Exploding out of the 1990s UK Britpop scene to achieve worldwide popularity, the band are among the most successful and influential acts of all time, selling over a hundred million records and inspiring countless bands like The Killers and Arctic Monkeys.

NOMINEES: Gem Archer, Paul Arthurs, Andy Bell, Liam Gallagher, Noel Gallagher, Tony McCarroll, Paul McGuigan, Alan White

FOREIGNER

With a legacy spanning five decades, Foreigner has dominated rock and roll radio, making them one of the best-selling rock bands of all time. With worldwide sales topping 80 million records, Foreigner's extensive catalog of hits is still recognizable to this day, with their music embedded in pop culture from 'Miami Vice' and 'The Simpsons' to 'Arrested Development' and 'Stranger Things'.

NOMINEES: Dennis Elliott, Ed Gagliardi, Lou Gramm, Al Greenwood, Mick Jones, Ian McDonald, Rick Wills

Visit rockhall.com to cast your daily votes for the Class of 2024.

APRIL 20 RECORD STORE DAY

PUT THE NEEDLE ON IT

Celebrating physical music across formats, get clued up on the limited edition releases you don't want to miss out on as **Record Store Day** returns for 2024!

BLUR
PARKLIFE

Parlophone

FORMATS: **1LP Zoetrope Vinyl**

Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Britpop group's seminal third album, featuring the hits *Girls & Boys*, *End Of A Century* and *To The End*, the record is reissued on a half speed mastered, single vinyl zoetrope picture disc.

ALISON GOLDFRAPP
THE LOVE REINVENTION

BMG

FORMATS: **2LP Black Vinyl**

Building upon her debut solo album 'The Love Invention', the original LP's key contributors, Richard X and GhostCulture (aka James Greenwood), reimagine its acclaimed songs through a sonic prism of techno, electronica and deep house.

BLOC PARTY
THE HIGH LIFE

Infectious

FORMATS: **12" Splatter Vinyl**

Available on vinyl exclusively for Record Store Day, this four blue splatter vinyl of 'The High Life' EP marks the first time the release, which has previously only been issued for download and on streaming platforms, has been out physically.

THE CHARLATANS
INDIAN ROPE

Beggars Banquet

FORMATS: **12" Picture Disc Vinyl**

Never reissued since its 1990 release, the band's debut single is presented as a special picture disc edition exclusively for Record Store Day 2024, featuring the B-sides *You Can Talk To Me* and *Who Wants To Know*.

DAVID BOWIE
WAITING IN THE SKY (BEFORE THE STARMAN CAME TO EARTH)

Parlophone

FORMATS: **1LP Black Vinyl**

A brand new release taken from the Trident Studios 1/4" stereo tapes dated December 15, 1971, featuring the provisional tracklisting for what would become 'The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars'.

DAVID SYLVIAN & NINE HORSES
SNOW BORNE SORROW

UMR

FORMATS: **2LP White Vinyl**

The first time on vinyl for David Sylvian's side project with his brother Steve Jansen and German musician/ producer Bernd Friedmann aka Burnt Friedman, featuring the nine tracks from the original album plus three additional recordings and mixes from the era.

DEAD OR ALIVE
THE PETE HAMMOND HI-NRG REMIXES

Demon

FORMATS: **2LP Yellow and Blue Vinyl**

Working with the band's later recordings, legendary producer Pete 'Mixmaster' Hammond presents a throwback hi-NRG remix project, completely reworking 11 of the Dead Or Alive's recordings in his classic' '80s sound.

DEXYS X DUTCH UNCLES
DANCE WITH ME

100%

FORMATS: **12" Vinyl**

A special one-off release featuring Dutch Uncles remix of a track from the recent Dexys album, 'The Feminine Divine', which is available for the first time.

DE LA SOUL
LIVE AT TRAMPS, NYC, 1996

Chrysalis

FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Tan Vinyl**

Recorded on May 16, 1996 at New York's famous Tramps nightclub, the album sees the core trio joined by several guests, including Mos Def, Common and the Jungle Brothers.

DEACON BLUE
PEACE WILL COME

Cooking Vinyl

FORMATS: **1LP White Vinyl**

Initially released in September 2023 within the 'You Can Have It All: The Complete Albums Collection' box set, this is the first vinyl LP release of Deacon Blue's 12 track acoustic album of re-interpretations of their best-loved songs, live favourites and cover versions.

DONNA SUMMER
MANY STATES OF INDEPENDENCE

Driven By The Music

FORMATS: **1LP Blue Vinyl**

Produced by Quincy Jones and written by Jon Anderson and Vangelis, 'Many States Of Independence' showcases a handful of mixes of the late star's monumental track, originally lifted from her self-titled 1982 album.

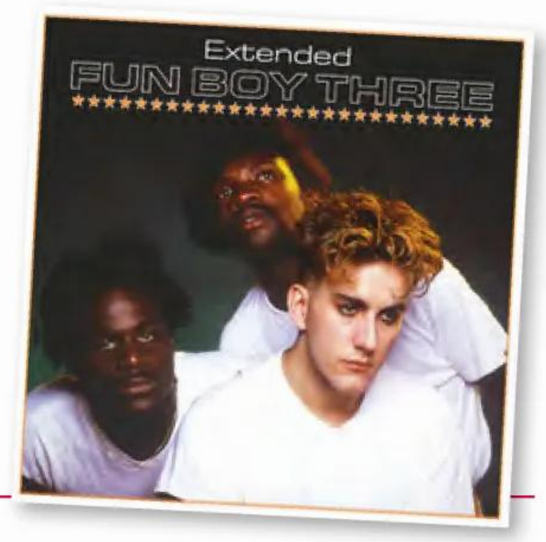
ELTON JOHN
CARIBOU
UMR
FORMATS: **2LP Sky Blue Vinyl**
Including the original album - featuring the singles *Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me* and *The Bitch Is Back* - to coincide with its 40th anniversary, this double disc set comes with a newly-compiled LP of bonus tracks.

EMMA BUNTON
A GIRL LIKE ME
UMR
FORMATS: **1LP Baby Pink Vinyl**
The debut solo album by the Spice Girls icon arrives on vinyl for the first time, featuring the UK No. 1 single *What Took You So Long?* plus *Take My Breath Away* and *We're Not Gonna Sleep Tonight*.

FLEETWOOD MAC
RUMOURS
Rhino
FORMATS: **1LP Picture Disc Vinyl**
The first official picture disc of the band's 1977 classic album is released for Record Store Day, featuring the iconic hits *Go Your Own Way*, *Dreams*, *Don't Stop* and *You Make Loving Fun*.

EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL
AT MAIDA VALE
Buzzin' Fly
FORMATS: **12" Vinyl**
Made up of four tracks recorded in April 2023 at the BBC's famous Maida Vale Studios - *Run A Red Light*, *Single*, *When You Mess Up* and *Nothing Left To Lose*, the session was the only live performance that the band did around the release of their new album 'Fuse'.

FATBOY SLIM
EVERYBODY LOVES A REMIX
Skint
FORMATS: **12" Zoetrope Vinyl**
Featuring six exclusive to vinyl for the first time remixes of some of Fatboy Slim's greatest hits, with contributions from Calvin Harris, Bruno Martini, Harry Romero and more.



FUN BOY THREE
EXTENDED
Chrysalis
FORMATS: **2LP Recycled Vinyl**
A new compilation collecting all of the band's extended 12" remixes, available as an exclusive one-time pressing on The Vinyl Factory's Eco-Jazz Recycled Vinyl.

GARBAGE
LIE TO ME
BMG
FORMATS: **12" Lime Green Vinyl**
Boasting four brand new unreleased tracks from the alt-rock band, the EP features a stunning cover of This Mortal Coil's *Song To The Siren* and a remix of their classic hit *Bad Boyfriend* featuring Dave Grohl, as well as two more unheard tracks.

GORILLAZ
CRACKER ISLAND (DELUXE)
Parlophone
FORMATS: **2LP Pink Vinyl**

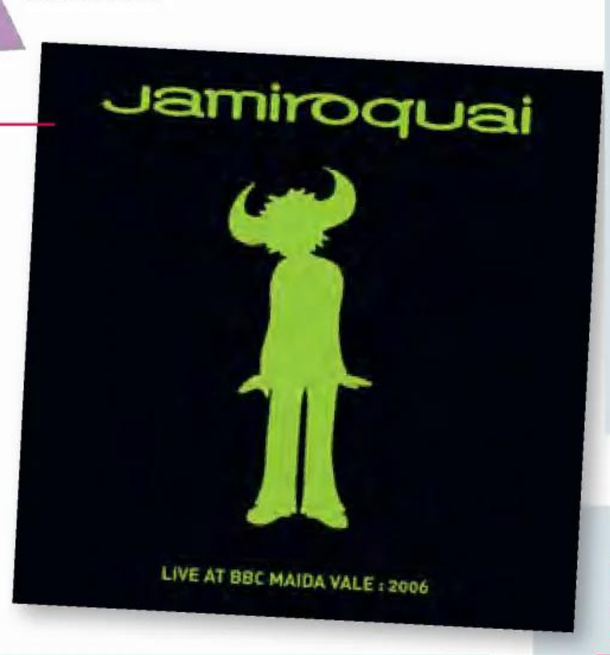
A special Record Store Day deluxe edition of their chart-topping 2023 album, featuring six additional tracks that haven't been available on physical formats before and exclusive new album artwork by Jamie Hewlett.

GROOVE ARMADA
WHITE LIGHT
BMG
FORMATS: **2LP Splatter Vinyl**

Unavailable since 2010, this limited Record Store Day release pairs with last year's sold out 'Black Light' splatter vinyl edition and features alternative editions of songs from that album.

JAMIROQUAI
LIVE AT BBC MAIDA VALE: 2006
SONY CMG
FORMATS: **12" Green Vinyl**

Released for the first time, this 12" neon green coloured vinyl showcases Jamiroquai's brilliant 2006 BBC live session recorded at Maida Vale for Ken Bruce.



JESSIE WARE
TOUGH LOVE (10TH ANNIVERSARY)
UMR
FORMATS: **2LP White Vinyl**

Following on from the 10th anniversary deluxe of her debut album 'Devotion', 2014's 'Tough Love' is the latest album from Jessie Ware to be curated as a 2LP set featuring the original tracklist plus bonus cuts.

KAISER CHIEFS
KAISER CHIEFS' EASY EIGHTH ALBUM
Kaiser Chiefs Recordings Ltd
FORMATS: **1LP Picture Disc Vinyl**

Produced by Amir Amor, the 'Easy Eighth' sees the Kaiser Chiefs return with a fresh and bold new sound, with contributions from Nile Rodgers and 10 tracks that reflect the band's statement of intent.

KATE NASH
BACK AT SCHOOL
Kill Rock Stars
FORMATS: **7"**

An unreleased album session track *Back At School* sees its completion and offers a sneak peek into her recording process, alongside the demo of album track *Space Odyssey 2001*.

KEANE
LIVE AT PARADISO, AMSTERDAM (29/11/2004)
UMR
FORMATS: **2LP Coloured Vinyl**

Released on vinyl for the first time, the set list includes hits from across the band's seminal debut album, 'Hopes And Fears' (2004). In the UK, this album will be included in the War Child titles.

KIM WILDE
SPECIAL DISCO MIXES

Cherry Pop

FORMATS: **2LP Transparent Red Vinyl**

Featuring 12" versions of 10 of Kim's classic singles, specially extended and reinvented in the spirit of the '80s, it marks the first time these songs are made available on vinyl.

KIRSTY MACCOLL
TITANIC DAYS

UMR

FORMATS: **LP**

The 1994 album from the late star arrives on vinyl for the first time, showcasing her sharp-as-ever lyrics on what she billed as either her "sad divorce album" or "a fantastic record".

LA ROUX
TROUBLE IN PARADISE

UMR

FORMATS: **1LP Splatter Vinyl**

Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of La Roux's second album, the LP has been remastered at Abbey Road studios and features the singles *Uptight Downtown* and *Kiss And Not Tell*.

LADYTRON
LIGHT & MAGIC

Nettwerk

FORMATS: **2LP Blood Red Vinyl**

Originally released in 2002, Liverpool electro-poppers Ladytron's second studio album 'Light & Magic' returns to vinyl, featuring the classic hits *Seventeen*, *Blue Jeans* and *Evil*.

LIGHTNING SEEDS
ALL I WANT / PURE

Sony CMG

FORMATS: **10" Yellow Vinyl**

This 10" yellow vinyl marks the 35th anniversary of *Pure* and Lightning Seeds with four tracks all recorded in 1989, including *All I Want*, which was released as a single in 1990, *The Nearly Man* and *Flaming Sword*.

LINDA RONSTADT
THE ASYLUM ALBUMS (1973-1978)

Rhino

FORMATS: **4LP Box Set**

Featuring all of Linda's Asylum albums from the 1970s, including 'Don't Cry Now' which turned 50 last year. Also included is 'Prisoner In Disguise' (1975), 'Hasten Down The Wind' (1976) and 'Simple Dreams' (1977).

LILY ALLEN
IT'S NOT ME, IT'S YOU

Parlophone

FORMATS: **1LP Zoetrope Vinyl**

Celebrating 15 years of Lily Allen's chart-topping album, featuring hits like *The Fear*, *Not Fair* and *22*, this pressing pairs iconic visuals from the era with infectious beats and the singer-songwriter's razor-sharp lyrics.

LULU
JAMES BOND: THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN

Demon

FORMATS: **1LP Picture Disc Vinyl**

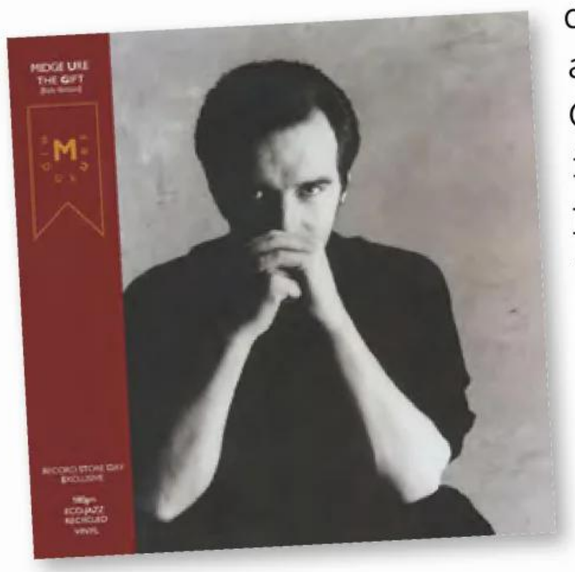
To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of 'The Man With The Golden Gun', this 12" picture disc features classic Bond imagery and Lulu's iconic theme.

MIDGE URE
THE GIFT (EARLY VERSIONS)

Chrysalis

FORMATS: **1LP Recycled Vinyl**

A new collection of early versions of tracks that became Midge Ure's debut solo album 'The Gift' (1985), including a previously unreleased track, pressed on The Vinyl Factory's Eco-Jazz Recycled Vinyl.



ORBITAL
ORBITAL

London

FORMATS: **2LP Red and GreenSplatter Vinyl**

Orbital's eponymous debut album, known as 'The Green Album', includes the seminal *Belfast* and a live version of *Chime*, the landmark dance track that launched their career in 1990.

MADNESS
EMBARRASSMENT

BMG

12" Black Vinyl

Apart from *Baggy Trousers*, *Embarrassment* was the only Madness single not to be released on 12" vinyl in the '80s, but now arrives on a six track EP, which features the original 7" mix plus a previously unreleased instrumental version specially mixed by Clive Langer.

NOEL GALLAGHER'S HIGH FLYING BIRDS
MAGIC SECRETS #2

Sour Mash Records

FORMATS: **7" Vinyl**

A one-off single from the former Oasis star, featuring two demo tracks released over the Christmas period last year on limited edition 7" vinyl.

OMD
BAUHAUS STAIRCASE INSTRUMENTALS

100%

FORMATS: **1LP Vinyl**

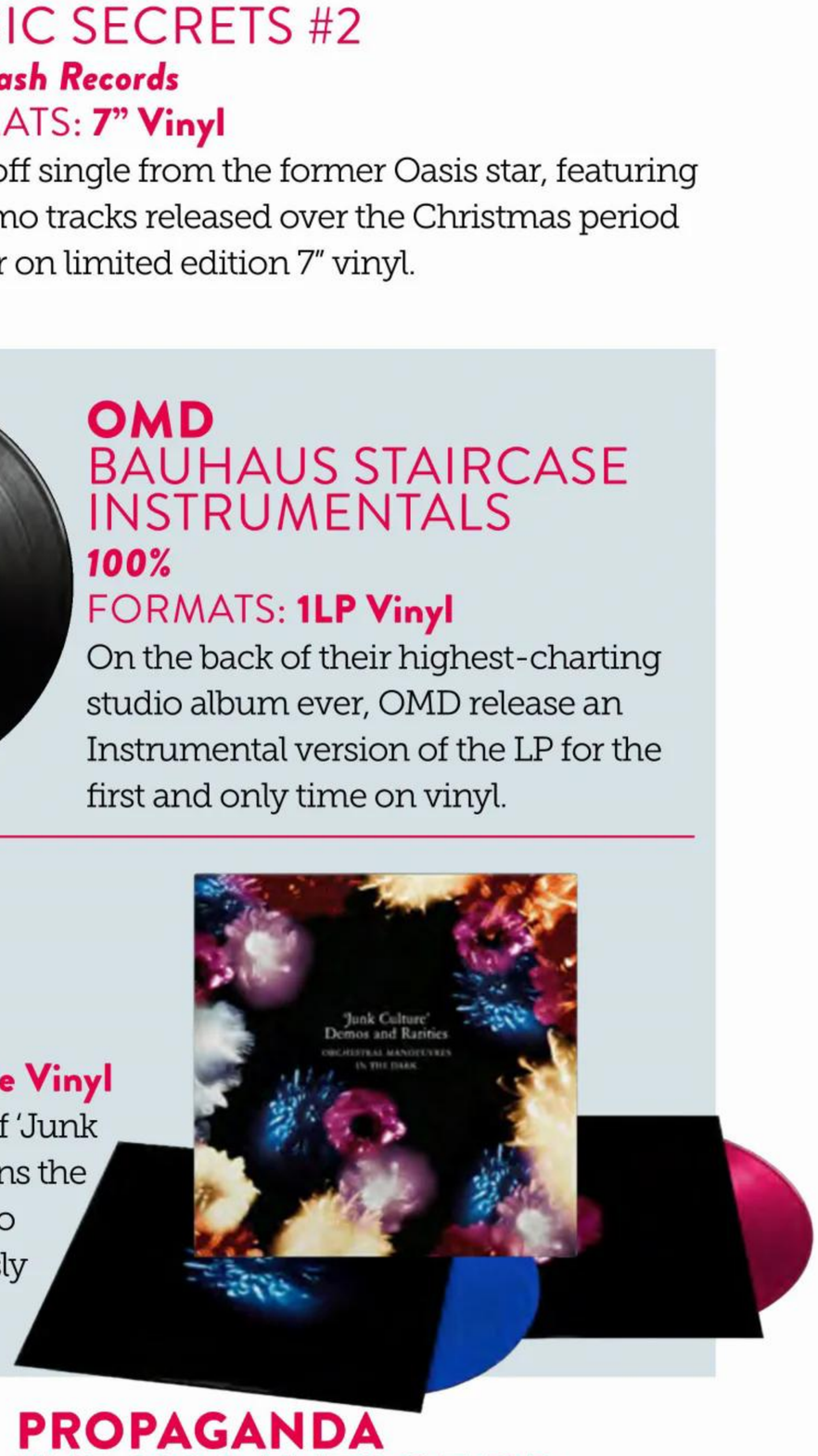
On the back of their highest-charting studio album ever, OMD release an Instrumental version of the LP for the first and only time on vinyl.

OMD
JUNK CULTURE COMPANION

UMR

FORMATS: **2LP Blue and Purple Vinyl**

Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of 'Junk Culture', this couple-disc set contains the 15 bonus tracks featured on disc two of the 2015 deluxe edition, previously only made available on CD.



PARAMORE
RE: THIS IS WHY

Atlantic

FORMATS: **1LP Red Vinyl, 2LP Red and White Vinyl**

A new version of the record which includes 12 tracks – 11 reimagined versions of songs from the original 'This Is Why' record, created by influences and collaborators of Paramore.

PROPAGANDA
THE 1000 EYES OF DR. MABUSE (VOLUME 1)

UMR

FORMATS: **Coloured LP**

Celebrating 40 years since Propaganda's landmark 1984 single *Dr. Mabuse*, this eight-track wonder showcases a plethora of different interpretations of one of the mid-'80s landmark electronic pop songs.

PULP
INTRO THE GIFT RECORDINGS

UMR

FORMATS: **1LP Blue Vinyl**

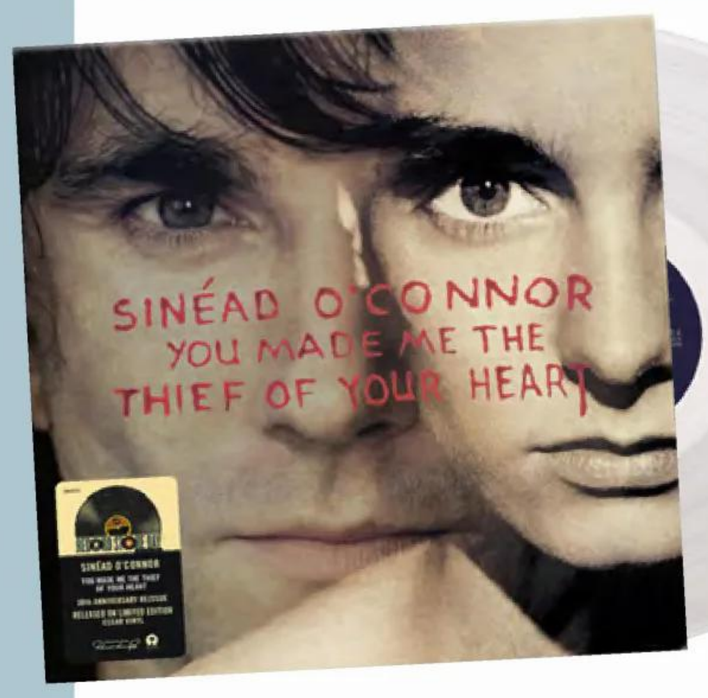
Originally released in October 1993, just prior to the band's Island debut, this collection includes all the singles Pulp recorded for Gift Records, including both the A- and B-sides.

SIA
COLOUR THE SMALL ONE

UMR

FORMATS: **2LP Coloured Vinyl**

To celebrate the album's 20th Anniversary, this 22-track reissue of the Australian star's third album features the original tracklist plus rare B-sides and remixes, such as *Sea Shells* and the fan-favourite *Breathe Me (Mylo Remix)*.



SINÉAD O'CONNOR
YOU MADE ME THE THIEF OF YOUR HEART (30TH ANNIVERSARY)

UMR

FORMATS: **12" Clear Vinyl**

Written by Bono, Gavin Friday and Maurice Seezer for the soundtrack to the 1993 film 'In the Name of the Father', this song does not appear on any of O'Connor's studio albums, but features here alongside the B-side *The Father And His Wife The Spirit*, performed by Sinéad and Gavin Friday.

SOFT CELL
NON STOP EXTENDED CABARET

UMR

FORMATS: **2LP**

Featuring contemporary full-length versions of the tracks from the duo's classic debut 'Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret', many of which have never been on vinyl before, originally featured on the 6CD box set.

QUEEN LATIFAH
NATURE OF A SISTAH

Tommy Boy Music

FORMATS: **1LP Black Vinyl**

A cross-genre dabbling set of R&B, dance, funk and reggae that tested the limits of hip-hop, the second album from Queen Latifah, featuring *Fly Girl*, *How Do I Love Thee* and *Latifah's Had It Up 2 Here* gets a limited vinyl reissue.

SHED SEVEN
CHANGED GIVER

COOKING VINYL

FORMATS: **1LP Black Vinyl**

Marking the 30th anniversary of their debut album 'Change Giver', Shed Seven have taken a trip down memory lane and revisited the entire album, giving it a stripped-back, unplugged vibe following their chart-topping 2024 LP, 'A Matter Of Time'.

SONIC YOUTH
HITS ARE FOR SQUARES

UME

FORMATS: **1LP Gold Nugget Vinyl**

For its first pressing since 2010, the classic best-of from the rockers makes its debut on coloured vinyl with a selection of the band's greatest hits.

SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTOR
REMIXES

UMR

FORMATS: **1LP Blue Glitter Vinyl**

A new compilation of remixes from her first three studio albums, including classics such as *Take Me Home (A Girl Like Me)*, *Get Over You* and the iconic *Murder On The Dancefloor*.

STEPS
DEEPER SHADE OF BLUE: THE REMIXES

Demon

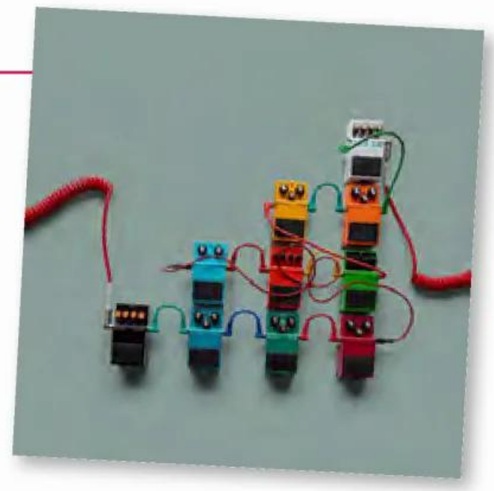
FORMATS: **12" Zoetrope Vinyl**

Making their debut appearance at Record Store Day, the six-track edition of the group's 2000 classic includes original and new versions of the song, including a fresh edit from Project K.

STEVEN WILSON
HARMONIC DIVERGENCE

SW

FORMATS: **1LP**



The perfect companion piece to Steven Wilson's 2023 album, 'The Harmony Codex', featuring remixed music from the original album that casts new light on the material.

SUEDE
AUTOFICTION: LIVE

BMG

FORMATS: **1LP Grey Vinyl**

A live version of the band's latest album, the No. 2 'Autofiction', featuring new recordings from their headline tour of the UK in March 2023, for the first time on vinyl following a CD release.

TALKING HEADS
LIVE ON TOUR

Rhino

FORMATS: **2LP Black Vinyl**

Previously unreleased in full, cuts from this celebrated live performance recorded live in 1977 for WCOZ that originally appeared on 'The Name Of This Band Is Talking Heads'.

THE ORB
THE HOLLOWAY BROOCH (AN AMBIENT EXCURSION BEYOND THE ORBORETUM)

Cooking Vinyl

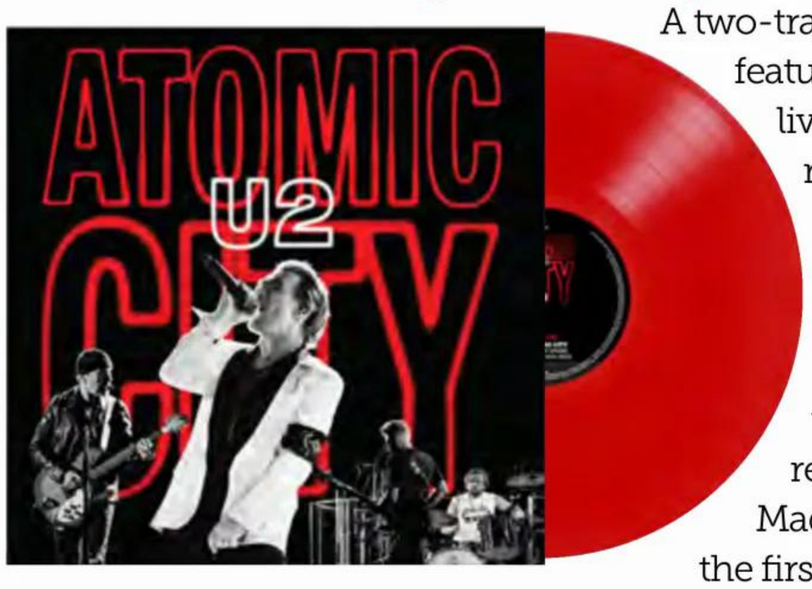
FORMATS: **1LP Green Vinyl**

A new collection of mixes from the pioneers of Ambient House, The Orb, curated and mixed by Alex Paterson and Michael Rendall, featuring new recordings and alternate mixes from past releases.

U2
ATOMIC CITY: LIVE FROM SPHERE

Island

FORMATS: **10" Transparent Red Vinyl + Poster**



A two-track release featuring a brand new live performance recording of *Atomic City*, captured at the world's most cutting-edge venue, alongside a remix by Mike WiLL Made-It, available for the first time physically.

UB40
UB45

SoNo

FORMATS: **1LP**

The brand new album from the reggae pioneers, featuring a combination of original material and re-recorded classics, available on vinyl for the first time for Record Store Day.

ULTRAVOX
STEVEN WILSON EXTENDED RE-MIXES

Chrysalis

FORMATS: **12" Vinyl**

Four Steven Wilson extended mixes of tracks from the band's 'Lament' album, two of which are included on the 'Lament (Deluxe Edition)' box set, plus two previously unreleased mixes exclusive to this 12".

MUSIC'S BIGGEST NIGHT

From Taylor Swift's record-breaking success to Kylie Minogue's first in over 20 years, step into **Grammys** season 2024!

Taylor Swift became the first artist to win Album Of The Year four times

Dua Lipa debuted her latest smash hit *Training Season*

Kylie Minogue became a 2x Grammy winner with *Padam Padam*

Lenny Kravitz was on hand to honour Jon Bon Jovi

THE WINNERS

RECORD OF THE YEAR

Miley Cyrus - *Flowers*

BEST NEW ARTIST

Victoria Monét

SONG OF THE YEAR

Billie Eilish and Finneas - *What Was I Made For?*

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

Taylor Swift - 'Midnights'

BEST POP VOCAL ALBUM

Taylor Swift - 'Midnights'

BEST POP SOLO PERFORMANCE

Miley Cyrus - *Flowers*

BEST COUNTRY ALBUM

Lainey Wilson - 'Bell Bottom Country'

BEST R&B SONG

SZA - *Snooze*

BEST MUSICA URBANA ALBUM

Karol G - 'Mañana Será Bonito'

LINE-UP | Grammys

BEST POP DUO/GROUP PERFORMANCE

SZA featuring Phoebe Bridgers - *Ghost In The Machine*

BEST ALTERNATIVE MUSIC ALBUM

Boygenius - 'The Record'

SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR, NON-CLASSICAL

Theron Thomas

PRODUCER OF THE YEAR, NON-CLASSICAL

Jack Antonoff

BEST R&B ALBUM

Victoria Monét - 'Jaguar II '

BEST PROGRESSIVE R&B ALBUM

SZA - 'SOS'

BEST AUDIO BOOK, NARRATION AND STORYTELLING RECORDING

Michelle Obama - The Light We Carry: Overcoming In Uncertain Times

BEST REGGAE ALBUM

Julian Marley and Antaeus - 'Colors Of Royal'

BEST LATIN ROCK OR ALTERNATIVE ALBUM *(tie)*

Juanes - 'Vida Cotidiana'; Natalia Lafourcade - "De Todas Las Flores'

BEST LATIN POP ALBUM

Gaby Moreno - 'X Mi (Vol 1)'

BEST RAP ALBUM

Killer Mike - 'Michael'

BEST RAP SONG

Killer Mike ft. André 3000, Future and Eryn Allen Kane - *Scientists & Engineers*

A double dose of MC with Mariah and Miley

Fantasia paid tribute to the late Tina Turner

The Boss took to the stage with the Bon Jovi frontman

Rising star Tyla scooped her first-ever Grammy

Billy Joel performed his first single in 17 years

BEST COUNTRY SOLO PERFORMANCE

Chris Stapleton - *White Horse*

BEST COUNTRY SONG

Chris Stapleton - *White Horse*

BEST FOLK ALBUM

Joni Mitchell - 'Joni Mitchell at Newport (Live)'

BEST POP DANCE RECORDING

Kylie Minogue - *Padam Padam*

BEST ROCK ALBUM

Paramore - 'This Is Why'

BEST AMERICANA ALBUM

Jason Isbell and the 400 Unit - 'Weathervanes'

BEST METAL PERFORMANCE

Metallica - *72 Seasons*

BEST JAZZ INSTRUMENTAL ALBUM

Billy Childs - 'The Winds of Change'

BEST ROCK PERFORMANCE

Boygenius - *Not Strong Enough*

BEST ROCK SONG

Boygenius - *Not Strong Enough*

BEST JAZZ VOCAL ALBUM

Nicole Zuraitis - 'How Love Begins'

BEST COMEDY ALBUM

Dave Chappelle - 'What's In A Name?'

Among the big winners was R&B superstar SZA

Brandy made a surprise appearance during Burna Boy and 21 Savage's performance

Annie Lennox made a statement with an In Memoriam tribute to Sinéad O'Connor

Billie Eilish and Finneas scooped several trophies for their 'Barbie' soundtrack cut

Shania Twain was every inch the rock chick with her Jon Bon Jovi tribute

PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES FOR THE RECORDING ACADEMY

Beyoncé teased her new country direction with a statement look

In addition to winning another Grammy, Joni Mitchell took the stage for a radiant performance

Tracy Chapman dueted with Luke Combs on her classic *Fast Car*

Stevie Wonder paid tribute to Tony Bennet during the In Memoriam segment

Celine Dion made a rare public appearance amid her ongoing health issues

BEST COMPILATION SOUNDTRACK FOR VISUAL MEDIA

Various Artists - 'Barbie The Album'

BEST SONG WRITTEN FOR VISUAL MEDIA

Billie Eilish - 'What Was I Made For?'

BEST SCORE SOUNDTRACK FOR VISUAL MEDIA

Ludwig Göransson - Oppenheimer

BEST MUSIC VIDEO

The Beatles - *I'm Only Sleeping*

BEST MUSIC FILM

Moonage Daydream

BEST MUSICAL THEATER ALBUM

'Some Like It Hot'

BEST GOSPEL ALBUM

Tye Tribbett - 'All Things New: Live in Orlando'

BEST CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC ALBUM

Lecrae - 'Church Clothes 4'

BEST AFRICAN MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Tyla - *Water*

MUSICARES PERSON OF THE YEAR

Jon Bon Jovi

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QUICK READ

NAVIGATING THE UNFORESEEN

Celebrating the release of his new solo album, **Bruce Sudano** talks 'Talkin' Ugly Truth, Tellin' Pretty Lies'!

"I'm the kind of songwriter who basically writes from my own personal perspective and my own emotional assimilation of life," says Bruce Sudano of his latest album, 'Talkin' Ugly Truth, Tellin' Pretty Lies'.

Across eight tracks that see the singer-songwriter explore the "tension and pressures of current life, the vulnerability of aging along with the denial and acceptance of its inevitabilities", he uncovers his place in an ever-changing, post-pandemic world.

"The first song that was released off his record was *Make The World Go Away*, which is just me saying, 'Can you take the weight off my shoulders?'," he reflects. "The second song, *Two Bleeding Hearts*, is an extra special moment about having a disagreement in a relationship where everything seems to be fine, but there are these subtle pressures that we're all under."

The track is a duet with Valerie Simpson, of Ashford & Simpson, who Bruce has known for decades, although approaching her with the song was something of a risk. "She is in the Songwriters Hall Of Fame, she wrote *I'm Every Woman* and *Ain't Nothing Like The Real Thing*, so she's iconic," he beams. "So for us to be able to come together, I think it's a very special piece and it was a special moment for me."

Bruce released his debut solo album, 'Fugitive Kid', in 1981, and worked with various groups over the decade beforehand. He also penned tracks for artists including Michael Jackson, Dolly Parton and his late wife, Donna Summer, who is integral to the new album as the creator of its artwork.

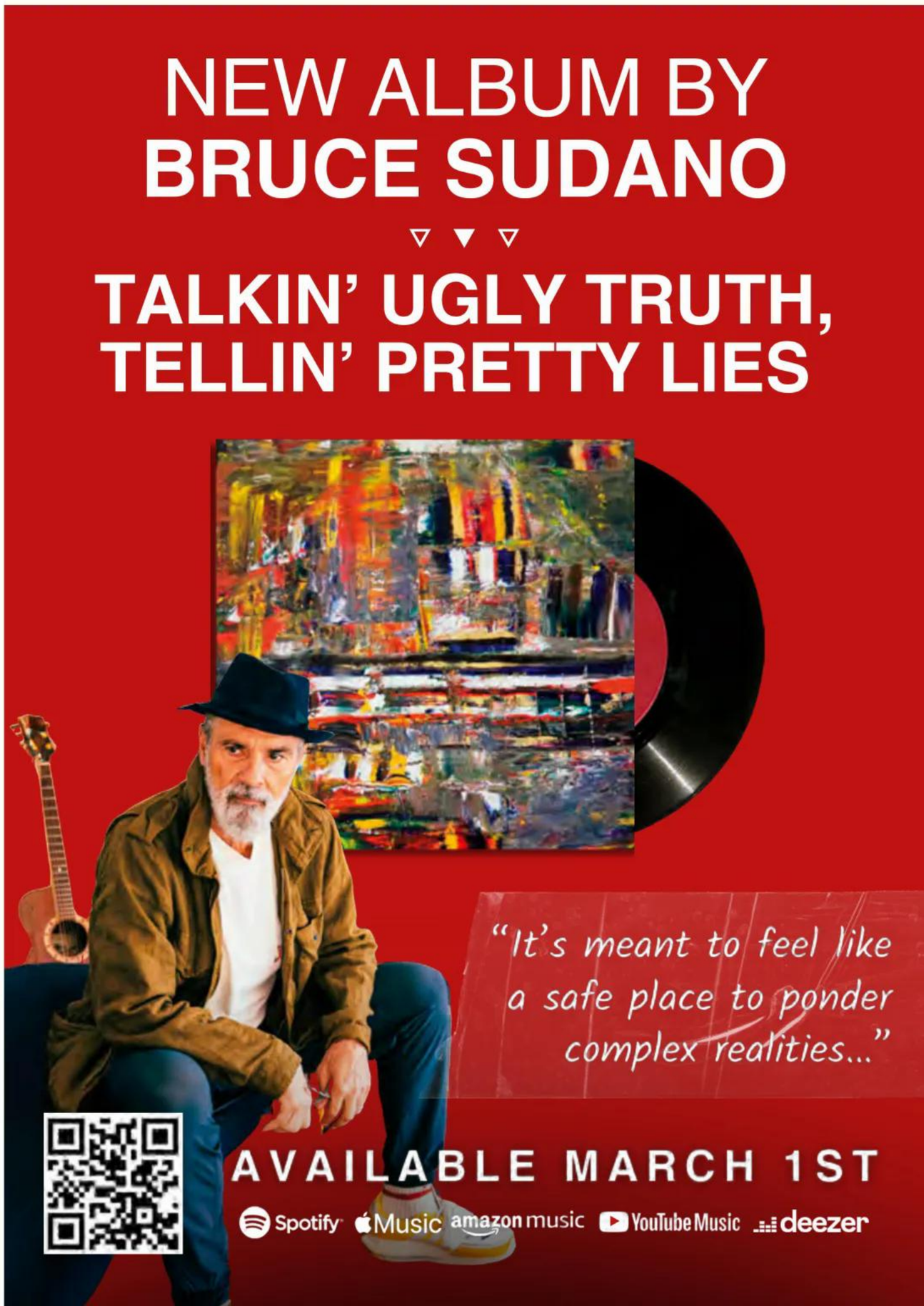
"Over my albums, I've chosen different artists to do the covers, and my now-wife Francesca Kaufmann is in the art world," he shares. "But when it came to this record, I just felt like this was the cover. It expressed to me the emotions - the highs and lows - and the ambiguities that this record contains. So all things added up, I thought maybe it's time to put a Donna piece on the cover."

And he hints there's "quite a bit of material" that could eventually see the light of day. "Donna was a super creative person and she was always sketching and designing, so I'm sure there will be a moment when there will be a full-on Donna art exhibition," he adds.

"I'm not somebody who forces the envelope, I'm somebody who goes with the flow, but I'm sure there's gonna be another special Donna moment..." **RP**

● ***'Talkin' Ugly Truth, Tellin' Pretty Lies' is out now on Purple Heart.***

PHOTO AMY WATERS



QUICK READ

HEADING FOR THE NIGHT!

Reflecting on Electribe 101's success ahead of the reissue of their classic 'Electribal Memories' album, **Billie Ray Martin** tells all about the group's heyday!

WORDS CONNOR GOTTO

It didn't take long for German-born singer-songwriter Billie Ray Martin to leave her mark on the pop charts when she relocated to London in the late 1980s.

Debuting as the voice behind S'Express' *Hey Music Lover* in 1989, she was already in the studio with Birmingham-based Joe Stevens, Les Fleming, Rob Cimarosti and Brian Nordhoff, who had answered her ad in Melody Maker: "Soul rebel seeks musicians – genius only."

Success followed with the singles *Tell Me When The Fever Ended* and *Talking With Myself* both going Top 40, and the album, 'Electribal Memories', becoming a Top 30 success, and although it was the only work released in the group's heyday, with a new reissue out this month Martin looks back fondly on the era.

How does it feel to be revisiting 'Electribal Memories' all these years later?

I never really listen to my own stuff, but of course I have done with this release and listening to these things now, I appreciate the musicianship that the guys brought to it. We kind of took each other for granted a bit back in the day, because we met, we figured out what we were going to do and we did it - we didn't think about it any further. We certainly didn't know it was particularly good; we knew we'd hit a nerve and there was something going on, but in hindsight I listened to the details of their musicianship, like the bass and the Kraftwerk-y hooks and great little electronic things, and I appreciate them so much as musicians and what they brought to the table and how it all came together.

Listening to the album now, it still sounds so fresh. How did you touch upon that sound?

I think it's the same with any sort of movement; the house thing was a movement, it became a worldwide thing, and when you're involved so deeply in any movement you're just going with the flow. So I would go to a club, come back to the guys in Birmingham and say, 'I heard a song yesterday and the bassline went like *this*'. Then I would go to the record shop, figure out whatever record it was I had heard, take it to Birmingham and say, 'Let's do something like this'. So there was no delay between me going to a club and hearing something I liked and us recording something similar.

Let's go back to the beginning. How did you and the guys come together to form the group?

In those days, all the bands would advertise for players in Melody Maker and I knew this because I always bought Melody Maker and NME. But I was a bit stuck; I was living in this housing co-op in New Cross that was particularly horrible and full of people that couldn't find anywhere else to live. It was really dodgy and I was a bit depressed about the whole thing, because I came to England to do the kind of music I wanted to do and it was going horribly.

I wrote "Soul rebel seeks musicians – genius only" because, at that point, I was trying to combine electronic music with soul and I knew that there were various ways I could go about it, so I didn't want to be too specific. Anyway, the guys came down from Birmingham on the strength of this ad, they came to my horrible room, and because they were in a rock band they had really long hair. I didn't like them. I thought they were kind of odd. I said to them, "Look, thanks for coming down but I'm not sure",

THERE WAS NO DELAY BETWEEN ME GOING TO A CLUB AND HEARING SOMETHING I LIKED AND US RECORDING SOMETHING SIMILAR

and then Brian called me shortly after and said, "Yeah, but we have a studio in Birmingham and you can use it to do some demos".

So I went up there and I took three songs, one of which was *Talking With Myself*, and I said to them, "Look, I've got this record here by Julian Jonah called *Jealousy And Lies*", which I heard at The Wag Club [in Soho] and it changed my entire musical universe. They said, "Oh, we've been experimenting with this kind of thing", so they played me some electronic stuff that they'd done and I was like "Oh, wow" - it was instant! And we basically just copied Julian's record and built it around my song.

That fusion of electronic and soul is a natural progression from disco, which is apparent on your cover of Odyssey's *Inside Out*.

Exactly - and the boys needed no persuasion to do that one, because they loved the song and it lends itself really well to our sound. I actually think the album mix of *Inside Out* is the best mix they've ever done! And the reason it works - again, I have to praise them - is because their electronic sound has such warmth and I think it's kind of magical how they came up with all that. They were no strangers to soul music and coming from Birmingham they had such a strong reggae background - which is really just soul as well - and I think there was something in that understanding of what my voice needed, because they always built the song and the mixes around my voice.

Where did the name come from?

I worked at [entertainment store] Forbidden Planet and one day they told me to pack 1,000 boxes of books. I came across this comic called Technotribe that I liked and I thought we could tag on the name of a drum machine or something. I suggested Electribe 303 - "That *has* to be our name" - and they said, "Nah, let's make it 101". And we all just loved it.

How did you attract the attention of Tom Watkins (Pet Shop Boys, Bros) who became your manager?

Managers generally come along when there's already some success and if I remember correctly, we weren't a priority for the record label at the time but then *Talking With Myself* became successful as a white label and it got to the point where they couldn't ignore it. So I'm not exactly sure how Tom came on board, but I think we were becoming known and he contacted us...

On the face of it, Electribe 101 was a success but behind the scenes things weren't so great, were they?

The success was sort of medium-ish; it wasn't enough for the record company to go, "Oh, my God, they sold half a million copies..." The album sold well enough for us, but for them it wasn't quite enough and I remember when *Inside Out* was released, Radio 1 rejected it, which was kind of the kiss of death in those days - and probably still is now.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

So we weren't quite successful enough to continue to be pushed and then they wanted to check out if they were going to drop us or pick up the next album, so we recorded ['Electribal Soul'] and they said, "Oh, it's shit". That's literally what the President of the company told us.

During that time you also toured with Depeche Mode, which didn't exactly go to plan.

Yeah, THAT was difficult. I'm still grateful, because what an amazing thing to play with those guys, but it was the kiss of death as far as our relationship because we were so unhappy on that tour. You know, who wants to get booed off stage every night and have things thrown at you by large numbers of people? All we really wanted to do was spread the love and do the music, but then we'd go out there and be faced with 20,000 people all booing and telling you to fuck off, and literally throwing things at the band. It was dangerous at times.

Especially in Germany and Paris; in France, they do this thing - apparently they did it to The Beatles too - where they make a sport of getting the groups off stage that they don't want to see, so they come to the venue with bags of shoes and tomatoes and coins. I remember Tom kept going, "Pick up the coins, you're gonna need them", and I just said, "This isn't fucking funny". It was so hateful.

But when we got to the UK, people behaved and were quite happy to listen to us, so it was a relief that the tour was over and we were back in the UK.

> **WE MET, WE FIGURED OUT WHAT WE WERE GOING TO DO AND WE DID IT - WE DIDN'T THINK ABOUT IT ANY FURTHER**

There's a treasure trove of additional content on the new reissue. Is that everything from the vaults?

There are a couple of demos that we didn't include, but they really weren't so good. At the time, we made demos like *Non-Doctor* and *That's How Strong My Love Is* - which came after Phonogram fired us - so I was in the clubs every night because I was a raver, and I'd go to Birmingham and say, "Right, change of scenery here, we've got to do all these rave tunes!" So we did do some demos but not all of them are very good.

Looking back now, what are your standout memories of Electribe 101?

The laughs we had in the studio! Sometimes we did feel the pressure and we didn't always get along, but there were many other moments, because we had the same sort of wicked sense of humour, that we would be falling about laughing in the studio and playing pranks on each other. We once told Les that we'd been asked to do [TV show] 'What's That Noise?' and the TV station had requested he do lead vocals. He *shat* himself! He lived a week of terror until we finally told him it was a joke. And we would do things like that all the time... **RP**

● ***'Electribal Memories' is out March 15 on Demon.***

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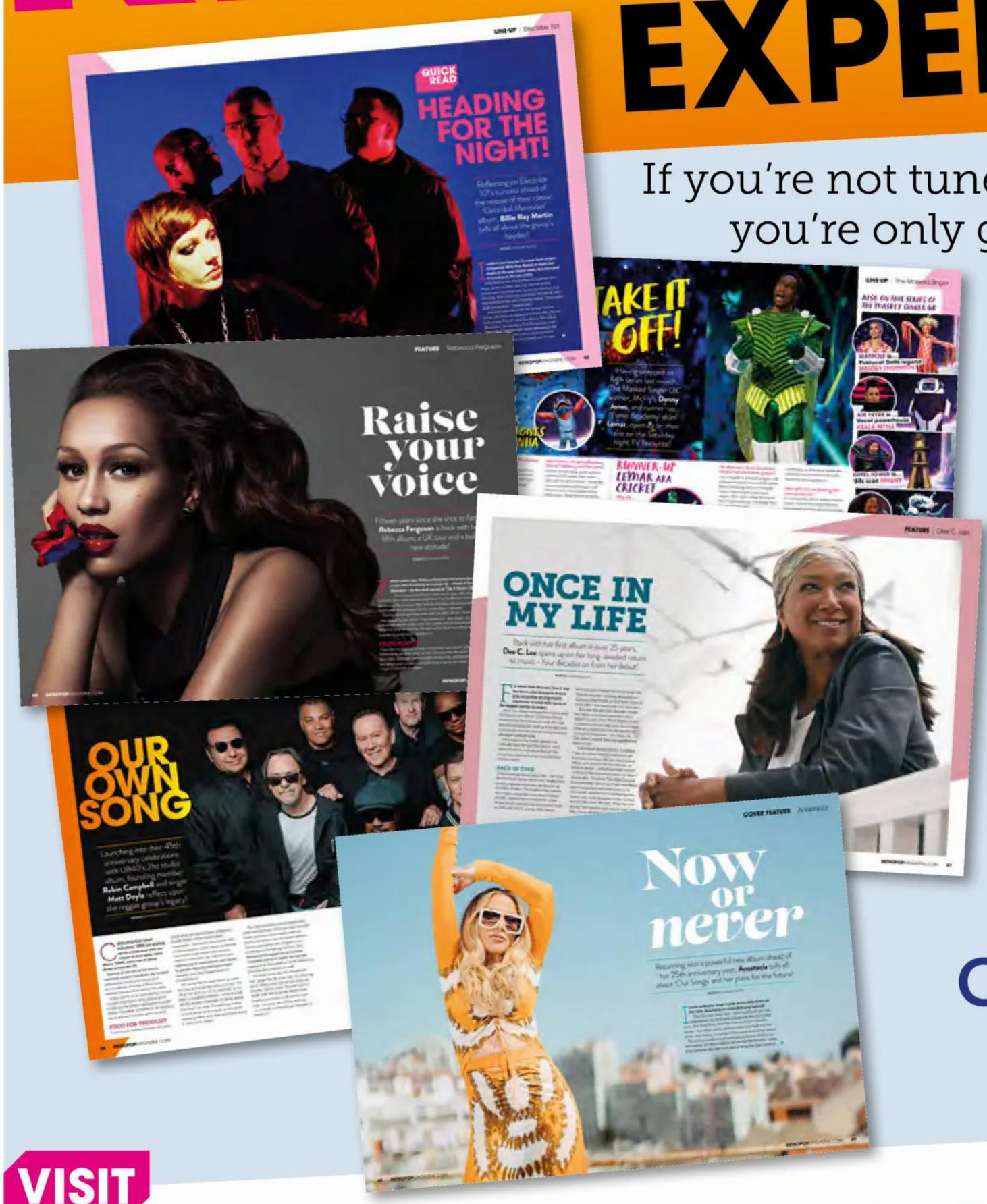

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Now or never

Returning with a powerful new album ahead of her 25th anniversary year, **Anastacia** tells all about 'Our Songs' and her plans for the future!

WORDS CONNOR GOTTO

Iconic anthems, huge vocals and a style that's all her own, Anastacia is a bonafide pop legend!

The Chicago-born star - who launched into the mainstream in 2000 and scored hits like *I'm Outta Love*, *Not That Kind*, *Paid My Dues* and *Left Outside Alone* - has eight studio albums under her belt, but her latest, 'Our Songs', is a project like none she's done before.

Featuring mostly translated interpretations of German rock songs, it's been a labour of love for the vocalist - even if the premise did take a second to wrap her head around...

BORN TO LIVE

"That was my thing! It was very hard to get me to say 'yes'," laughs the US superstar during a whistle-stop visit to the UK to promote the LP, which became a hit across Europe following its initial release last September. The concept, she says, was that of producer Christian Geller, who approached her with the idea that: "If anyone could sing German songs in English and make it work, it's you."

Still, Anastacia - who, when recording began, already had seven Top 20 albums in the country, including No. 1s with 'Freak Of Nature' (2001) and 'Anastacia' (2004) - was hesitant. "I was like, 'I don't know that I'm that talented'," she admits. "And I'm not saying that my voice is not nice or that I can't sing, but I realised that although there isn't anything wrong with these German songs, they don't cross the border or get the opportunity to go to other territories internationally. I don't think it's a particular thing against Germany; it's just the way they sound on the ear. Rap is cool and rock is cool - but with 'regular' music like I'm doing, it's harder because the words and melodies don't necessarily match."

The concept of the album, of course, isn't as simple as recording a collection of covers; several of the tracks were originally written and recorded in German, with Anastacia flexing her songwriting muscles and translating the lyrics herself. "The first song that was submitted to me, that made me know it's possible, was [lead single] *Best Days*," she recalls. "And the singer [Campino] who wrote it for his band - which is literally called The Dead Trousers [Die Toten Hosen] in English - sang the English lyrics as a demo version for me."

After that, she set to work on other tracks, but soon found it wasn't as plain sailing as hitting up Google Translate for a quick fix. "I thought it would help me more," she adds of the search engine's language changing feature. "But if you Google any of these songs that are German, my lyrics are different, but the meaning is the same. It always comes back to what the original sentence is trying to say."

Take the single *Now Or Never* for instance; the original version, *An guten Tagen* by Johannes Oerding, translates to English as *On Good Days*. Singing the translated words over the melody, she cackles: "I was like, 'There's no way - I'm putting the pen down!' Because the melody is great, but it just didn't fit.

If you Google any of these songs that are German, my lyrics are different, but the meaning is the same.

The universe and all the struggles I went through in it, I was riding the storm and it gave me this great karma.

That repetitive thing at the beginning of the verse and the beginning of the chorus had to be strong and had to say the same philosophy of life, so I love 'now or never' because it's strong and the alliteration there is kind of catchy."

I point out a video doing the rounds on TikTok where natives of several western countries share various words in their language, highlighting the stark differences between the German language compared with the majority of Europe. "It's the whole syllable thing," Anastacia chimes. "The melodies only had so many, so I had to figure out what they were saying. And truthfully, I had my own fear of doing wrong in the translation and I was very scared. In my head I was saying, 'You can't do this - how are you going to translate these songs?', so I had to get out of my own way and just do it.

"But I have to say, it was a great passion project that really ended up being a dream to do. It's one of the hardest projects that I accomplished well, and I doubted myself a lot, but sometimes when you doubt yourself a lot and you put yourself through stress, you can come out with a really good product. Because you work so hard to make it good."

SUPERGIRL

As a writer, Anastacia has penned the majority of her biggest hits - along with the bulk of her catalogue as a whole - but 'Our Songs' tapped deeper into the songwriting formula that exercised a different muscle entirely. "I wasn't in control of the nuances of how the songs are put together, like the rhyming patterns," she reflects, "which, for me, normally happens automatically.

"So this really was 'scientific writing' - but I will say that the last song I did, I wrote it in half an hour," the hitmaker adds of *Just You*, a collaboration with Peter Maffay. The song is based on his 1979 hit *So bist du* and was conceived by Anastacia as a solo track before the musician offered to jump on the song as a duet.

"I had no idea I was going to get a 'yes'," she grins. "He wanted to FaceTime and I thought it was going to be like, 'Let me see if I like you and then we'll let you know [if you can use the song]', because I was leaving the studio the next day so I didn't even think about it.

But not too far into the conversation he said, 'I think *So bist du* is gonna be a good song for you to translate, so you do the translation and send it to me then I'll sing my part'. I was like, 'OK', and in my head I was like, 'Wait. What just happened?' I didn't know that might have been a possibility.

"I got off the phone like, 'Oh, no fucking pressure - it's only his biggest song in the world and he's never done a duet with anyone...'," Anastacia laughs. But if crafting the smooth country ballad came easy to her, recording the new version of the track was a challenge for Peter. "He loved it but he said it was very difficult to sing, because he had to really concentrate to learn and phrase the words. So I gave him a demo of me singing both verses, keeping it very simple, and did both of our harmonies so that he had an idea of what was going on.

"Then he sang his part and I thought I was going to do my part again, but everyone said, 'No, we'll just use your demo'. I wanted to do it again and I knew I could do it better, because that demo was *so* an afterthought."

Afterthought or not, both were thrilled with the finished track and it ended up shaping Anastacia's plans for the summer. "I had no idea then that he was having a farewell tour this year, so now I have a duet with him, we did a video for it, we promoted it and he goes, 'I'd really love you to join me on the farewell tour and be a part of the show'. So we literally pushed the button together to put the tickets on sale for the whole press launch and it was almost as if he said, 'I'm passing the gauntlet to this chick'.

"It couldn't have turned out any better. The universe and all the struggles I went through in it, I was riding the storm and it gave me this great karma," she smiles. "And then to have everyone from the record saying they loved my version of their track, it ended up to be beautiful."

Listening to 'Our Songs', the effect isn't that of a covers collection; while other people's songs are at its core, Anastacia's lyrics, personality and voice shine through, radiating a familiar warmth from an artist who is confident in her niche and still delivering some of the highest quality work of her career.

"That's what floored the Germans! Like, 'How did she pick all these songs and know they'd work?'," she laughs

I took a DNA test and I am Dutch, Finnish – all the parts I thought were German are actually Scandi – and then there's Irish and English from my mom.

I just went with my gut, and sometimes as an artist you just have to do what you do to the best of your ability.

of the record. "To be honest, I just went with my gut, and sometimes as an artist you just have to do what you do to the best of your ability. But I haven't done something this creative in a long time."

It would seem that the knack was intrinsic, as in the past Anastacia has spoken of her German heritage on the side of her late father. However, all wasn't as it seemed. "I thought I was, but my mom lied," she reveals. "I took a DNA test and I am Dutch, Finnish - all the parts I thought were German are actually Scandi - and then there's Irish and English from my mom."

Now, her latest project reestablishes her long-thought connection with the country and within the album's artwork - a graffiti portrait of Anastacia, surrounded by messages close to the heart of the singer such as 'Love Is Love', 'Make A Difference' and, of course, 'Dog Mom' - is another key tie.

"The brick wall was important with the album being German," she says, in reference to the Berlin wall, "but also going back to my Chicago roots and the red brick buildings. I wanted to put the two together and feel like these are our songs."

Of the various graffiti moments on the piece, she adds: "I threw my own little moments in there for my own sake, but it really was wanting to make the physical copy be a work of art, because I felt like what I did was a first time moment. And also you have touches like the 'Freak Of Nature' colours in there..."

BEST DAYS

Over more than two decades in the business, Anastacia has risen to become one of the most successful pop acts on the planet, delivering some of the all-time greatest pop hits and earning diva status early in her career, appearing on line-ups alongside Celine Dion, Cher and Stevie Nicks. And as with all the greats, she's not just about the voice; with a style all of her own - denim jeans, bold tops and her trademark glasses - she soon became one of the most instantly-recognisable figures in the industry.

Over 20 years may have passed but she's still rocking the look - with some of those original pieces too! "These are the original shoes that you'll see in red, in black... every colour," she points out of the outfit she's wearing for our interview. "The pants were made by

Covid already took over my 20th - how dare her - so 2025 is gonna be like, 'She's alive and 25'. Ooh I like that!

Pat Fields in about 2003 and when I got here my suitcase didn't show up and I thought they'd be gone forever!"

Over the years it's not all been plain sailing, with the singer battling various health issues, including breast cancer at age 34, and the heart condition supraventricular tachycardia, which she discovered she had at age 39. While in London, she set tongues wagging during an appearance on 'This Morning' when the singer, who is pescetarian, chewed on chef Ainsley Harriot's pork, leaving fans "angry" - according to the media, at least - and calling her a "fraud".

She sets the record straight. "I don't do meat because I have Crohn's which, for me, is difficult," Anastacia says of the inflammatory bowel disease, with which she was diagnosed as a teenager. "So not to bring up my poop on TV, I was like, 'I don't think this will hurt'. You know, it's not like I'm not gonna be able to work if I have a couple of bits of pork."

Was it worth it? "It was amazing," she chuckles. "I was like, 'Oh my god, there's gristle and grease - is that part of it? It's been so long...' Of course, everybody picked up on it but, you know, we'll just blame it on the pork!"

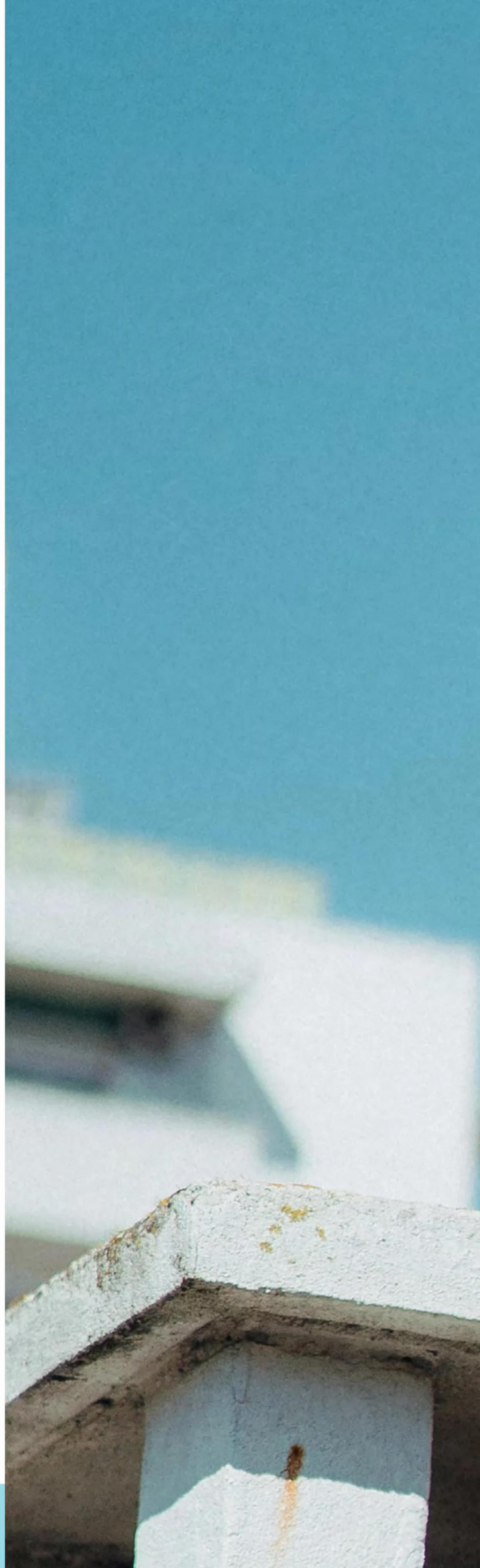
Back in 2022, Anastacia's health came back to bite her when she set out on her belated 20th anniversary tour and was struck with Covid, which led to a string of the dates being pushed as she recovered from a bout of the virus that wiped her out for weeks.

"I didn't have Covid that was easy, so each day we were hoping it would be OK and it was the worst cancellation time I've ever had in my entire career," she admits. "I'd think I was getting better then the next day it would be worse again. You know, we all experienced Covid shit but, of course, mine happened during my 'I'm Outta Lockdown' tour - which turned out to be the worst title ever. But it was a super cool tour and I loved doing it. It was so much fun!"

She says there's more new music to come - although remains tight-lipped about what that entails exactly - but when it comes to the next 12 months she's adamant that there'll be a celebration of her latest milestone. Details are under wraps, but after being forced off the road once already, she's determined to throw the ultimate party.

"There needs to be," she beams. "Covid already took over my 20th - how dare her - so 2025 is gonna be like, 'She's alive and 25'. Ooh I like that! There's the tagline for my tour!" **RP**

● ***'Our Songs' is out now on Edel.***



PHOTOS MARCELL BRELL

OUR OWN SONG

Launching into their 45th anniversary celebrations with UB40's 21st studio album, founding member **Robin Campbell** and singer **Matt Doyle** reflect upon the reggae group's legacy!

WORDS CONNOR GOTTO

Celebrating their latest milestone, UB40 are gearing up for a busy year with the release of their aptly-titled album, 'UB45', and a run of arena shows across the UK.

Starring all but one of the band's surviving original members, the 14-track set features brand new songs plus re-recordings of some of their most beloved classics from across the years.

It also serves as an introduction to new vocalist Matt Doyle who, sitting down to discuss the project alongside founder Robin Campbell, is thrilled to be joining a band whose music he grew up with.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"I can't quite believe it's been 45 years, but it does feel like it's been a lifetime," laughs Robin of the band's latest milestone. . Formed in December 1978 in Birmingham, UB40 began as friends who knew each other from various schools across the city, with its name referencing an attendance card issued to people claiming unemployment benefits from the Department of Employment.

The irony that it's kept them in work for four and a half decades isn't lost. "It's what I've done all of my adult life, so it's been a complete lifetime - even though my life doesn't seem like it's been going that long," he adds. "Everything seems to have gone by in a flash, so it's pretty amazing when you stop and think about it. I try not to, really!"

The new record not only marks their latest anniversary, but it also sees vocalist Matt make his album debut with the band, following a run of single releases. The former Kioko star stepped in as frontman of the group back in 2021, following the departure of Duncan Campbell due to ill health (he himself replaced Ali Campbell in 2008, following the founding member's exit).

"It's been more like 45 minutes for me," quips the 36-year-old. "It's coming up to three years, which has gone so quickly, but it's a joy. They're a joy to work with. We're in the studio now working on some stuff and it's non stop - touring, recording, writing... - so it really is everything I thought it would be."

His history with the band goes back to his childhood, riding in the back of his parents' car and listening to UB40 playing on the stereo. So when he joined the group, they were stunned: "There was a second of disbelief, but really they were over the move for me. My parents have always been extremely supportive of my music; as soon as they saw that I wasn't academic - because I never got good grades at school, but when it came to music I always excelled - they really nourished it and I'm very lucky to have them."

They've heard the band's recent singles - including the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games anthem *Champion* - but when it comes to the full 'UB45' album, he's only played them "snippets" because they "want to be surprised" on release day. The set boasts seven new recordings, along with reworkings of the band's biggest hits from across the decades.

"They're obviously songs that we still play live and that was the whole point, really. We're celebrating 45 years and we wanted parts of the album to showcase the band as it is now, with Matt singing those old songs," Robin reflects. "The audiences and our fans have already reacted so positively to Matt and the way he does those songs, so it was great to be able to record the songs the way we do them now - still very similar to the originals, but with a few slight changes.

"We wanted to show how well Matt fits into UB40 and how it still sounds like UB40. Even though he's not doing an impression of Ali, he's singing the songs as he sings them and they sound great. I'm sure there'll be criticism and some people will go, 'Why did you bother?', but for me it's obvious why we've done it and it's all part of the 45 year celebration."

SOME KINDA SIGN

Ahead of the album release, the band have shared lead single *Gimme Some Kinda Sign*; a cover of Brenton Wood's 1967 track *Gimme Little Sign* with a special UB40 flavour added to the soul classic. It was chosen by Matt, who brought it to Robin unaware that the song had been on the guitarist's wish list since the 'Labour Of Love' (1983) days.

"When we first put 'Labour Of Love' together, I compiled a list of about 200 songs that I thought we could cover beautifully and I've been mining from that list for the last four volumes of 'Labour Of Love'," says Robin. "We've done 40-odd songs from that list of 200 and one of the tunes that was still on my list that hadn't been done was *Gimme Some Kinda Sign* - which I still have the 7" vinyl of from 1969 when I was a teenager!"

Matt had become aware of the track via Hepcat's 2000 recording of the song. "It's a real slow reggae version, which I thought could do with speeding up, so when it came to discussing cover ideas I suggested that one and Robin told me he'd wanted to do it for years," Matt elaborates. Robin admits: "I was flabbergasted because it was actually in my collection, but Matt just loved the tune and I think it's also indicative of how our tastes coincide. The fact that he came in and suggested the same track I've been talking about for decades - everybody just went, 'OK, we've got to do it now'."

It's not only the cover that Matt brought to the table; creatively, Robin admits him joining the line-up has ushered in a new era for UB40, who are in the studio working on more new tracks when we chat. "When you've been doing it as long as we have, we still love doing it but it's easy to get jaded. And I'm sure there were times when we were jaded," he reflects. "But having Matt involved is completely reinvigorating and it's enthused us again: we're writing new material, he's bringing lyrics to the band, and it's just wonderful to have his enthusiasm. I think our experience rubs off on him and his enthusiasm rubs off on us. It's a symbiotic relationship."

"I'M STILL BEING EDUCATED AND THERE'S STILL SONGS THAT I HEAR AND GO, 'I'VE NEVER HEARD THAT BEFORE!'"

MATT DOYLE

It also helps that Matt's a huge fan of the band's catalogue and more than happy to tackle hits like *Red, Red Wine*, *Food For Thought* and *Cherry Oh Baby* on their latest LP. "From the classics, I love the new version of *Sing Our Own Song*," he says of the end result. "My favourite one to sing live will

always be *Kingston Town*, but I'm really happy with how I sang *Sing Our Own Song* on the record and, sonically, I think it sounds incredible.

"But I'm still being educated and there's still songs that I hear and go, 'I've never heard that before'," he adds of the group's extensive repertoire. "There's loads of songs that I'm quite keen to sing live too."

HOME

More than four decades may have passed since the group started out and established a reputation for delivering punchy hits often with socio-political lyrics - and if their 21st album is anything to go by they still have plenty left to say.

"We still write about the same things that we were writing about 40 odd years ago, because we still have passions for the same things and the same things still annoy us. And Matt's no different," Robin maintains. "He's angered by the same subjects as we are and he's a similar kind of guy. We wouldn't have invited him to join the band if he wasn't a similar kind of person, with a similar kind of views, anyway, so it's not like he's brought new subject matter but he has brought a new zeal and a new enthusiasm. And he's full of lyrics, whereas we've written 300 songs already!"

With so much already behind them, most bands nearing their half-century mark would be slowing down, but not UB40; there's a UK arena tour booked in November and they plan to keep on performing for as long as possible. "The only time we ever stopped was Covid, which was a forced stoppage, but this is what we do; we record and we go back out on the road and play for people," insists Robin. "Then as soon as we've done that for a year or so we get back in the studio and start again, which is the cycle that's been going on since we started. And as long as we're able, I can't see us slowing down."

EVERYTHING SEEMS TO HAVE GONE BY IN A FLASH, SO IT'S PRETTY AMAZING WHEN YOU STOP AND THINK ABOUT IT. I TRY NOT TO, REALLY!

ROBIN CAMPBELL

Over the years, the band has sustained success in five separate decades and the musician says that's reflected in their audience too. "We gain new audiences all the time and especially with things like social media, YouTube and Spotify, we're constantly shocked when we go out at how many young kids there are in the front row, singing along to every song that was recorded before they were born."

That's the same internationally, too - "We go back to places like South America, where we haven't been for years, and all of a sudden we're playing enormous venues and they're selling out," Robin beams - but there is one place they'd like to perform. "We haven't played mainland China and that's something I'd love to do," he adds. "We did Hong Kong, which was great, but it would be lovely to go and play China."

A little closer to home, they also have their eye on a return to Glastonbury - over 40 years after they last headlined the Worthy Farm event. "It would be lovely to do that again - when we did it in the '80s it was a much smaller event, but it was great fun," Robin smiles. "We'd love to do the Legends slot - that's the one we want to do!" **RP**

● ***'UB45' is out April 19 on SRG. Tickets for UB40's UK arena tour, which kicks off in London on November 1, are on sale now.***

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST, RICHARD PURVIS

Raise your voice

Fifteen years since she shot to fame, **Rebecca Ferguson** is back with her fifth album, a UK tour and a bold new attitude!

WORDS CONNOR GOTTO

Fifteen years ago, Rebecca Ferguson became a household name after finishing as runner-up - ahead of One Direction - on the sixth series of 'The X Factor UK'.

The vocal powerhouse went on to sign with Simon Cowell's Syco label and released four Top 10 albums, but behind the scenes the success that initially felt like a dream turned into a nightmare that plagued her for more than a decade.

Having reemerged last year with her fifth album, 'Heaven, Pt. II' - the sequel to her classic Top 3 debut LP - the singer-songwriter has reclaimed the reins over her career and as she prepares to steer her ship across the UK with a new tour launching in May, she radiates a newfound confidence.

FROM NOW ON

"I feel like I've become more comfortable in myself," reflects Rebecca as we look back on her journey over the past 15 years. In that time, she's released multiple hit records, performed around the globe and collaborated with huge names in music like John Legend and Nile Rodgers.

Beneath the surface, she questioned everything. "I used to feel like an imposter and that I shouldn't be here," she says. "I don't know what's happened to me over the last couple of years, but I've realised I do deserve a seat at the table and even though I'm still in awe of it all, it's beautiful to finally be able to accept my success."

The success has been plenty, with Rebecca peaking at No. 3 with her first album 'Heaven', scoring a Top 10 hit with *Nothing's Real But Love* and rounding out the campaign with a pair of MOBO Awards nominations. She's toured behind all of her albums - including 'Freedom' (2013), 'Lady Sings The Blues' (2015) and 'Superwoman' (2016) - and is getting ready to do the same for her latest release.

Eight years on from her previous record, Rebecca's return is as much of a surprise to fans as it is to the singer herself. "For a while, I was not ready to make another album; I thought I'd go and live on a farm and make candles to sell online or something," she laughs. "But I just had a moment where I said, 'Come on, you've got to do this', which is when I went in and did this album."

Unquestionably her most personal work to date, 'Heaven, Pt. II' reflects Rebecca as she stands today while drawing upon her experiences - good and bad - to capture a portrait of an artist unafraid to speak out and question the status quo. *'In this game of Simon Says / Anyone can be removed for even drawing breath / And the quiet was normalised / And it's haunted me for years / I need to speak my mind / 'Cause I won't stay / I won't stay silent / I won't stay silent now...'* she sings on *Found My Voice* in one of the most thinly-veiled verses on the record.

She's referring to talent show contestants being forced into contracts, with threats to be ejected altogether if they didn't work with specific managers and accountants, all without independent legal advice. "It needed to be said," insists Rebecca, "but they're still getting away with a lot of it. A lot of the people involved probably should be in jail - it deserves a jail sentence - but they've all managed to get away with it and they're all living happily in their big beautiful houses. So they can handle a few lyrics."

When work began on her first long-player, Rebecca

> ***It took me a long time to be able to accept success and I think that's just because of my upbringing***

was presented with a selection of tracks that the record company deemed suitable for their latest signing. But she turned down their offer and insisted on co-writing every track on the album instead.

"They found me difficult because they were so used to people just wanting to be famous and willing to be like, 'OK tell me what to do and show me where to go'," she insists. "But with me it was like, 'I don't want to do that... That song's crap... I've actually written my own songs...' Also, I think because I was young but I had children, I was probably a bit wiser and more aware, so I was asking questions like 'Why do you get to pick my accountant?' and 'Do I get to pick my own lawyer?'. I was someone that would question the whole thing and I realised it wasn't right, even though everyone else was willing to just go along with it..."

RUN REBECCA

The opening track on 'Heaven, Pt. II', *Digging For Gold*, is another confessional moment, this time seeing the singer *'surviving by the skin of her teeth'*. "It reminds me of being young and struggling and trying to get through life," she says of the track - a sentiment that had a renewed significance when she set about launching her own record label and navigating life as an independent artist.

"It's tough," Rebecca admits, "because you put so much into it and then there's so much to pay for as well, so it was a tough old game. It's all coming together now and there was fear. But seeing so many people supporting it and getting behind it made me really grateful."

The results have been eye-opening. "For the first time I took back control and I feel like that's what this album is for me, it was just a massive 'FU' and I'm so glad it's been received well," she chuckles. "Obviously, I haven't got a major label behind me and they pump like literally hundreds and thousands - if not millions - behind PR, but when I look at the stats for 'Heaven, Pt. II', they're going up every day and I think it's going to be one of those albums that slowly grows, so I'm happy with that."

Another concept Rebecca's only just getting her head around is that of 'streaming farms'; when major labels pay to increase their streaming numbers, ensuring they earn royalties and proving their artists

> ***I don't know what's happened to me over the last couple of years, but I've realised I do deserve a seat at the table***

are popular - even if it's not really the truth. "I didn't know about it until I was told not too long ago that apparently more than 20 per cent of streams are not real," she says. "But also, if an artist releases an album and it's at, say, No. 2,000, the record companies will pay retailers to make it look like they're in the Top 10 that people buy, which I only learned about when I started forming these one-on-one relationship with retailers as an independent artist and a record label. So as soon as I found out about that, I was like, 'I don't even care about numbers anymore because it's all just not real'."

FOUND MY VOICE

Six years after she was last on the road with her 'Revolution Tour', Rebecca is about to start the creative process for her upcoming run of shows, which launches at Manchester's Bridgewater Hall on May 17 and plays into June with dates across the country. Right now, she's in the early stages. "We'll be getting into it soon - that's when the fabulous gowns are being ordered and everything will get sorted," she smiles. "So I'm not quite sure yet, but I think I'm going to be using a lot of screens and imagery - and a lot of glamour!"

The screens may be a safer bet than the props she splurged on for previous outings; one year, Rebecca envisioned a huge chandelier hanging over the stage, but it didn't quite go according to plan. "I ordered it and it looked fabulous, but no one in the crew wanted to put my chandelier up," she exclaims. "They basically refused and then everyone told me they couldn't find it. I mean, you can't miss a giant chandelier! Turns out, they couldn't be bothered putting it up so they sent it back!"

When it comes to 'Heaven, Pt. II', Rebecca's looking forward to performing closing number *You Don't Have To Leave*, as well as revisiting cuts from her previous releases with a fresh perspective. "On each album, there's a song; on 'Superwoman', I felt like *Hold Me* never got its moment. I also liked *Oceans* and *I'll Meet You There*. That's the album I felt like didn't get its moment," she sighs.

"The 'Freedom' album helped a lot of people – especially people with addiction, randomly – and ended up being an album that really helped people get through breaking through something, but I found it incredibly difficult to create. I was going through

> ***For a while, I was not ready to make another album; I thought I'd go and live on a farm and make candles to sell online***

> ***They found me difficult because they were so used to people just wanting to be famous and willing to be like, 'OK tell me what to do and show me where to go'***

so much pain, it was so traumatic for me, and it's not really an album that I go back to. Maybe I should go back and listen to it..."

She elaborates: "I feel sadness when I think about that album, actually, but when people write to me and say that it helped them through a breakup or through addiction, it's like, 'OK, the pain had a purpose'."

When Rebecca announced her latest LP, she billed it as her last - a stance she's sticking with today. But that doesn't mean there isn't more music to come: "I think it is [my last album], although I've been writing at home the last couple days because I've had lots going on, so it's not the last of me making music. If you keep an eye on Spotify, I'm going to be uploading things because, let's face it, I just want to make music for fun. So there'll definitely be surprise tracks but I don't feel like they need to be packaged and sold.

"I'm not going to name a particular artist because I don't want to disrespect them and they're so talented, but they're literally out there every day selling their soul. And I probably used to be in the same place, but I never want to be there again. It's like, 'This is new music, if you like it then please listen to it', but I'm not gonna be doing silly things to get people to buy it. Everything I do I want to be completely authentic and I don't want to ever feel like I'm not being myself."

Now, she's got various projects on the go - including plans to work on scripts and books - all underpinned by a fresh outlook and perspective that comes from finally embracing 15 years in the business.

"It took me a long time to be able to accept success and I think that's just because of my upbringing. But I've finally got to the place - I would say in the last couple of months - where I'm like, 'No, you need to step into your diva era, Becky - if you want M&Ms on your rider, you ask for M&Ms'," she giggles. "I do want to be more confident in who I am and not so self-deprecating, so I'm stepping into my diva era which I hope will give me a little edge of confidence!" **RP**

● ***'Heaven, Pt. II' is out now. Rebecca's tour launches May 17 in Manchester. Tickets are on sale now.***

PHOTOS BEN MEADOWS

ONCE IN MY LIFE

Back with her first album in over 25 years, **Dee C. Lee** opens up on her long-awaited return to music - four decades on from her debut!

WORDS CONNOR GOTTO

For more than 40 years, Dee C. Lee has been a key fixture in British pop, amassing an impressive repertoire of work with some of the biggest names in music.

Now, the singer-songwriter is back with her brand new album 'Just Something', marking her first release in over 25 years and showcasing her craft as a vocalist and songwriter on what stands out among her strongest material ever.

Her return to the studio played out naturally over the past five years - and sitting down to chat about the LP, the experience seems to have reignited her creative spark.

BACK IN TIME

"A lot of people know who I am - but they don't *actually* know who I am," laughs Dee as she prepares to put out the follow-up to 1998's 'Smiles'. Throughout her career, the singer-songwriter has been notably prolific, appearing as a member of the British band Central Line first as Dee Sealy in 1981 and Dee C. Lee in 1983, before becoming an original backing singer for Wham! and later working alongside ex-husband Paul Weller in The Style Council from 1984 - the same year she went solo.

But over the past two decades, music has taken a backseat and while she's dipped in and out of the industry, it was a chance reunion with Acid Jazz's Eddie Piller at a 2020 event for the launch of 'Long Hot Summers - The Story Of The Style Council' film that sparked her latest move.

"Just before the pandemic, I realised I was at a place where I needed to get back into working. My son kept saying, 'Mum, you need to do something, go back to music' - which basically meant, 'Get out of the house and leave us alone!'," she laughs. "So when The Style Council documentary came out, it was wonderful and it reminded me of the history of my career, and led to me bumping into Eddie, who is the founder of the coolest record label ever. He said, 'What are you doing? You need to sing again!' and I was like, 'I'm so glad you said that because I

need something to do - help me!'. And put it this way: if I'd met him on the Wednesday, we had the ball rolling by Friday, and here we are..."

The new album, 'Just Something', features 11 songs, including nine originals co-written by Dee, which channel her musical history and influences with an autobiographical thread running through the lyrics. "A couple of the songs are quite old songs, but then a lot of the others I put together with a some of the different writers that I always call, like Michael McEvoy and Ernest McKone," she explains, noting their collaborations date back to the 1980s. "In regards to this album, I didn't even know I was gonna get an opportunity to make music again so what I was really trying to achieve was something that showcases my whole career, musically. I literally feel like you can tell everybody I've ever worked with from the flavours of the songs on this album. And I'm not saying it's necessarily going to be my last but you know, being logical and practical it may be, but if that's the case I'm so incredibly proud of this album."

MOUNTAINS

Across the 11 songs, Dee's infectious personality shines through; from the sun-soaked nostalgia of opening number *Back In Time* that reflects upon her 1980s heyday, to the intrinsic passion of divorce ballad *Mountains* and tongue-in-cheek betrayal anthem *Trojan Horse*. "Some people think that's about a lover but it's not - it's about a best friend who let me down," laughs the singer. "So re-listen and think about some bitch who, when she hears it, is going to be very scared."

The album's two covers, meanwhile, were both suggested by Piller, with Renee Geyer's *Be There In The Morning* taking its cue from the Norman Connors 1979 version and exploding into a full-on celebration. Meanwhile, *I Love You* was written by Don Blackman and recorded by Weldon Irvine in 1976. Neither would have been her first choice, she admits, but credits the label boss for his "very good ear".

> A lot of people know who I am - but they don't actually know who I am

"He chose them both because he thought they'd work with my voice," she smiles. "Even though I knew them, they wouldn't have been songs that I'd have chosen, but when we did them they just worked and I was blown away and appreciative of him for picking them for me."

Much of 'Just Something' leans into a classic Motown-inspired sound that complements Dee's matured and soulful vocals to perfection, but rewind 40 years and her sound was worlds away. In 1984, she made her debut on CBS with the pop single *Selina Wow Wow*, but the track stalled in the UK charts at No. 88 and although she released a run of singles with the label, only the No. 3 smash *See The Day* went Top 40 and the experience put her off making music for a while.

"It was around the time that the Wham! thing was moving on to concentrate more on George and the natural progression of his career, so the label said, 'Thanks for what you did, would you like a deal with us?'. So I did four songs for them to show them the difference in my songwriting - there was pop with *Selina*, then *See The Day* was the ballad and there were two more that I can't remember," Dee recalls. "They ran with *Selina Wow Wow*, which was fine and I was happy with, but then they wanted to stay on that tip and I could see straight away that I was going to have a problem.

"Hindsight really is a bitch because you learn everything after the event, but at the time I thought I knew what I was doing and said, 'Yeah, I'll do this now and then I'll be able to go the way I want to go'. But that didn't happen and I ended up having a real clash of opinions with my A&R and they literally pulled me from recording, so I just stayed put and went back to working with The Style Council."

ONCE IN MY LIFE

Eventually released in 1985, *See The Day* remains Dee's biggest hit and got a new shot at life when Girls Aloud released their version of the song as a single from their third album, 'Chemistry' (2005). In turn, it introduced her material to a new generation of listeners. "And it's really funny for me to think of it like that," she chuckles. "People saying, 'I love that Girls Aloud song' - but I don't care and I'm so not bitching about them, because I was more than grateful and I thought they did a really good job with it!"

Over the years, she's worked with various artists, from Adamski to The Blow Monkeys' Dr Robert and Animal Nightlife, but reflecting on the past her favourite collaboration is that with Gang Starr frontman Guru on his solo project 'Jazzmatazz'.

"I got to work with Donald Byrd, Lonnie Liston Smith, Roy Ayers, Rodney Jordan - as well as Guru and all these fabulous rappers," she grins. "Once I'd done that, I hit the peak of my career and I didn't really know what else to do with myself because I'd done everything I'd ever wanted to do musically by my late 30s. I mean no disrespect to the other artists, but music changes all the time and when I got back listening to music after that project, there was

PHOTOS BEN MEADOWS

> I'm not saying it's necessarily going to be my last, but if that's the case I'm so incredibly proud of this album

nothing that excited me anymore so I just chilled out and took a step back for a while. But there's only so many lunches with friends you can do before you get bored!"

Now she's back in the game and even ahead of this album's release, she's looking to the future. Having cleared out her stockpile of songs, Dee has plans to return to the studio to work on more material, while also considering looking to the past and revisiting her catalogue. "There's some old stuff from albums that I put out by myself - I think 'Smiles' only came out in Japan - but there's some good stuff on there, so we might go back and freshen them up."

Before then, she's set to return to the stage for an album launch show at London's Rough Trade East on March 22. On the exact set she has planned, she teases: "I am going to make that a surprise, but I will be doing tracks from the album and there's always going to be one or two songs from the past. But we'll definitely have to revisit *See The Day* and see how we can do that live." **RP**

● ***'Just Something' is out March 22 on Acid Jazz.***

HEY THERE WILD THING

Returning with Starsailor's sixth album and first in seven years, frontman **James Walsh** tells all about 'Where The Wild Things Grow' and the band's 25th anniversary!

WORDS CONNOR GOTTO

Riding high on the 20th anniversary celebrations of their classic album, 'Silence Is Easy' (2003), Starsailor return this month with an all new collection of tracks that sees the band as they stand today.

The latest LP from post-Britpoppers, 'Where The Wild Things Grow', has been five years in the making, celebrating the past, exploring the present - including a global pandemic and a particularly transformative period in frontman James Walsh's personal life - and looking towards a bright future.

Arriving seven years after their last album - Starsailor's highest-charting in over a decade - the band's renaissance is only growing stronger, even if apprehensions are rising within the group as release date approaches...

INTO THE WILD

"The songs have been coming together since 2019," says Walsh of the creative process behind the LP, which has been ongoing for the best part of five years but took a backseat as the group navigated lockdown restrictions during the pandemic. During that time, they polished off a series of early demos, which helped bring onboard Townsend, which is releasing the album, and producer Rick McNamara of Embrace, who also worked on their previous release, 'All This Life' (2017).

> **When I started to write the album, my marriage had recently ended and I was living alone, trying to come to terms with that**

"We started really getting into the album in 2022 and it's one of those things where it's been 90 per cent there for at least a year, so these past 12 months have been us putting the icing on the cake," he smiles. It's a process they take painstaking care over and when it comes to releasing new material, the band still gets jittery all these years later.

"I still get nervous on release week, because you put years of work into making an album and it all comes down to how it goes in that week and how many people go out and buy it or stream it," James reflects. "It's kind of out of your hands, but those sort of nerves never go away, because that all impacts

“
It really means something when you see someone going, ‘I’ve just got the album... *These* are my favourite tracks... I’m so glad you’re still around doing it...’
”

how you're perceived by everyone in the industry, who are looking at how your album did and whether you're going up or down the festival running order."

Some of the most enduring albums of the past four decades didn't set the world alight when they were first released, I suggest. "You do get more slow burning albums," James agrees, "so it's not always the end of the world when that happens and it doesn't do as well as you'd hoped. But it definitely helps when it does!"

His apprehensions aren't only related to the album's success; 'Where The Wild Things Grow' was born not only in the midst of a global pandemic, but also during the breakup of the vocalist's marriage. He's since found love again and welcomed a child - his third overall - with his new partner, with his personal circumstances backdropping many of the album's lyrics and themes.

"The world, from a personal point of view, was in a state of flux," he recalls. "When I started to write the album, my marriage had recently ended and I was living alone, trying to come to terms with that. Then, a year and a half after that all ended I started a new relationship and we've got a toddler. So a lot happened - it's been a whirlwind! A lot of sitting in darkened rooms with my guitar, processing these feelings."

However, he insists this is *not* a breakup album. "If anything, that's 'All This Life'," James maintains. "This album's a bit more reflective; I've come to terms with that emotionally, if not financially, and now it's like: 'What's next? How do I be at ease with being single again and rebuilding my life?' And then, lo and behold, I started a new life and couldn't be happier..."

HANGING IN THE BALANCE

Formed in 2000, Starsailor's line-up today remains the same as it did back then, when the band met whilst studying a music course at Wigan and Leigh College. Bassist James Stelfox and drummer Ben Byrne had been playing together in Warrington, Cheshire for a number of years, and when their regular singer fell ill, they recruited young Chorley singer and songwriter Walsh from a school choir.

Then named Waterface, they asked long-time friend Barry Westhead to join the band in 2000 on keyboards, and having tried a number of guitarists for the band, Walsh took up the instrument after failing to find the right fit for the group.

As their prominence on the live circuit grew, the group changed their name to Starsailor after the 1970 album by Tim Buckley and signed with EMI that same year, releasing their debut single, *Fever*, and its parent album 'Love Is Here', in 2001. It - along with 'Silence Is Easy', featuring some of the last productions by the late Phil Spector before his murder conviction and imprisonment in 2009 - peaked at No. 2 on the UK charts, while follow-up 'On The Outside' (2005) was also a Top 20 hit.

Now, they're releasing music independently, but the process remains much the same. "We all have integral roles within the band," James insists. "I come up with a lot of the ideas and the seeds of the songs, then I'll take them to the band and see where they can take them. Barry is amazing at coming up with different melodic flourishes or putting different chords underneath the chords that I'm doing to make things sound that bit more interesting - because he's basically a better musician than I am! My guitar playing is a tool for my songwriting, but I don't regard myself as an amazing guitarist."

> **"We were encouraged to think it was going to be a juggernaut, so when there was a dip in how things were going, it was quite difficult to come to terms with"**

He continues: "Ben will come up with a drum beat that takes the song in a different direction as well and obviously Stel, our bass player, plays with [English rock band] Spiritualized as well, so he's a fantastic musician. If I'm the leader - for want of a better word - at the front end of the process, Stel takes that mantle on in the back end of the process; he's the one listening to mixes, fine-tuning, and making sure that the final sort of 10 per cent is right."

It's their different strengths, he says, that makes the band's creative process so seamless. "You need that balance to rein each other in," he laughs. "I'll be like, 'Let's put it out, it sounds great' - and it's a demo we've recorded in a basement! Whereas on the other side, Stel will be like, 'No, I'm still working on it' and he's trying to perfect two seconds of music. I think you need to pull each other in those different directions until you find a happy medium and that's why we're really pleased with the album, because if strong opinions within the band completely get their way, then it's never quite right. There's got to be a decent balance of everyone's opinions."

AFTER THE RAIN

In the past, the fate of the band's material was in the hands of the record company, but their relationship with Townsend - with whom they're working for the first time on 'Where The Wild Things Grow' - is one of give and take. "They're been really encouraging and enthusiastic; they're happy to put their heads above the parapet and say, 'I don't think this sounds quite right', or leave us to it if everything's going well," James smiles.

"When you're with a label, because they've invested a lot of money in a band, they're a bit more hands on in

terms of how they want the band to be promoted and what they want the singles to be, but this is a little bit more of a partnership."

He's quick to point out that Starsailor "worked with some brilliant people at labels over the years" and looking back on more than two decades of hits, James admits the changing face of the music industry - "where there was this sensationalist form of journalism where any new movement that came in was there to get rid of the one that went before" - had a significant influence on the trajectory of their career.

"It's quite nice to be at peace with who we are," he smiles. "In the immediate years after the success of 'Love Is Here' and 'Silence Is Easy', we were encouraged to think it was going to be a juggernaut and go from strength to strength, so when there was a dip in how things were going, it was quite difficult to come to terms with. Even though it's the way 99 per cent of artists go; in fact, a lot of bands just have one big album and then disappear, but we were lucky enough to have two. So unless you were The Killers or Coldplay, there was an inevitable plateau."

In the years since, social media, he says, has helped give the band a renewed confidence: "If you released an album and it didn't live up to expectations or it didn't get the reviews that you wanted, back in the day, apart from the message boards, there wasn't really a way you could capture a positive feeling about what you're doing. It was just the label saying, 'Oh, this hasn't done as well as we expected,' and then you're on a massive downer. But now, without wanting to sound cheesy, it really means something when you see someone going, 'I've just got the album... *These* are my favourite tracks... I'm so glad you're still around doing it...' Those little messages really keep you motivated and it's made a big difference to have that positivity to balance out any disappointment or too-high expectations that we might have put on ourselves."

Later this month, the band will launch the LP with a release show in Warrington, before hitting the road in early April for a run of UK dates, giving Starsailor the opportunity to debut new tracks from the record live. Of the songs he's most looking forward to playing, James shares: "*Dead On The Money*, because it's going down so well - I can't wait to hear the crowd reaction to that. And my favourite song from the album is *After The Rain*. One of the reasons, obviously, is because I love playing it and I think it should go down well with the crowd. But also, it's quite a simple song, so some of the others I'm slightly more nervous about playing because there's so many different parts to remember, whereas - without wanting to sound too wanky - that one just flows out of me when I play it and it feels really natural and enjoyable to do." **RP**

'Where The Wild Things Grow' is out March 22 on Townsend. Starsailor play a launch show at Parr Hall, Warrington that evening and kick off their UK tour on April 3 in Birmingham.

PHOTOS ANDY EARL

As a band, you need to pull each other in those different directions until you find a happy medium and that's why we're really pleased with the album

INTRODUCING...

GIA FORD

With her debut album - recorded in LA with Phoebe Bridgers' producer Tony Berg - due soon, **Gia Ford** is set to make waves this year!

"There was a period of time when I wanted to be a guitarist - like Slash or something - but I've always liked writing stories and I think the two things just naturally came together," says singer-songwriter Gia Ford of her musical beginnings.

Last year, the rising star signed with Chrysalis Records and headed out to Los Angeles' famous Sound City Studios with renowned producer Tony Berg to record tracks for her debut album, due out later this year. When we speak shortly after a London showcase event, she's still aclimatising back to life in Blighty.

Not from her stint in the States. "I'd been out with my girlfriend's family in Thailand and literally got back the day before, so it was kind of an out of body thing," she laughs. "But it was good - maybe I should aim to do that for more shows!"

Recent singles like *Falling In Love Again* and *Alligator* came to life on stage, backed by a tight band that captures the essence of an artist whose inspirations range from classic Fleetwood Mac and Dusty Springfield, to Lana Del Rey.

But her earliest recordings were worlds away. "I wrote my first song when I was 10; my dad used to make trance music and I thought he could record it for me in his little studio. It was called *Do You Wanna Rock?* and it was stupid," Gia admits. "Actually, it was pretty hooky - I wasn't always this way - but I went through a period in my teenage years that was all about electric guitar-led, quite dark and wayward kind of stuff. I'm also a huge fan of Massive Attack and Portishead, though, so I think I was bored of formula and wanted to do something that was a bit more interesting, looking more towards the dark corners of things, and that shows up in terms of structure as well, I think."

> Even though I'm not necessarily a very dark person, I've always liked serial killers and creepy stuff like that

Now in her mid-20s, the transition to making albums was a natural progression, Gia says. "It was written quite sporadically, but I obviously like to write about similar characters and they're all kind of alienated from life," she reflects. "So I just pulled from loads of different sources - some real life sources, and there are some songs about myself on there - but they all kind of have a theme of being an outsider with lots of dark thoughts and stuff like that. I've always liked that, weirdly - even though I'm not necessarily a very dark person, I've always liked serial killers and creepy stuff like that."

She elaborates: "I like the psychology of it; there's a lot to untangle with people who are hiding something. It doesn't have to be crimes or even have to be dark, but there are people that have a facade and I like it when I can untangle and interpret that in interesting ways."

For a writer whose work is so rooted in the human condition, it's interesting that, although there are autobiographical songs on the album, Gia largely shies away from making herself the subject of her recordings. "There's two songs on there that are vaguely about me - like 'this could be about me, maybe...' - and I feel like I'm gradually working towards writing honestly about myself, but at this point I just find it really boring," she maintains. "I don't like to wallow in all of my intricacies, because I'm a bit annoying, so I like to write about other people. You know, the concept of writing a whole album about the times where I felt a certain way and then having to tour it - why would I want to do that?"

Instead, her previous release, the dreamy *Poolside*, takes the perspective of a poolboy working under the glare of the Los Angeles sun and taps into a feeling of disconnection that, in some way, everyone can relate to. It was inspired by an image from a coffee table book depicting Los Angeles' affluent scene in the 1960s, but having already started writing tracks for the follow-up to her as-yet-untitled debut, Gia is working to "unlock the ability to find myself interesting enough to write about".

"But I like telling stories as well," she grins. "I'm not really into realism very

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

much, because I like metaphors; I like to compare things to other things and sometimes I do think that I'd be more suited, eventually, to writing books, because in my personal time I like to write long form stuff that is more detail oriented. But maybe the challenge of telling such a rich story in so little time is why I like songwriting so much..."

Gia's next single, *Loveshot*, is another observational track, this time exploring people's interactions on a daily basis, as observed by the musician - who was born in Sheffield - whilst in London. "I was on the tube on the way to a session and I saw all these different kinds of people, and I thought about how, in the north, we talk to each other - it can be anyone - but that doesn't happen in London," she sighs. "I was like, 'God, it's really sad because we could probably come away with so much more knowledge and emotion about people and the world we're living in if we just chatted to each other'. So I started to write about loads of different characters and tied it together with this sentiment that we could probably do nicer and better by each other and befriend each other a bit more. So really, just another excuse to write about loads of characters - I should be writing books!"

With only a handful of singles to her name, Gia's already making waves and building a solid fanbase online, which is only set to get bigger as the album release date approaches. "I'd love to be able to tour it properly and give it a real good shot at life," she beams. "Maybe play it from start to finish, which I think would be really fun, because I just want it to be heard by as many people as possible. I'd like to be in a place where I know it's done what it can do.

"I'm really proud of it and there's actually quite a lot of pop in there, so I think it will appeal to a lot of different people..." **RP**

● ***Loveshot is out March 20 on Chrysalis. Gia Ford's debut album is due later in 2024.***

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RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS

83 REAL POWER

Gossip make a triumphant return after a decade away!

PHOTO CODY CRITCHELOE

80 ALBUMS

Bananarama | Bruce Sudano
Dee C. Lee | Sarah Jane Morris
Sheryl Crow | Starsailor | Vince Freeman

89 REISSUES

Climie Fisher | Electribe 101 | Girls Aloud
I, Monster | Kirsty MacColl | Kylie Minogue
Madonna | OMD | Paul Young
Sheena Easton | Wham!

RATINGS EXPLAINED: ★★★★★ BRILLIANT ★★★★☆ STRONG ★★★☆☆ GOOD ★★☆☆☆ AVERAGE ★☆☆☆☆ POOR

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS

BANANARAMA
GLORIOUS: THE ULTIMATE COLLECTION
★★★★★

RELEASED: **March 8 *London***
FORMATS: **2CD, 3CD Deluxe Edition, 1LP Red Vinyl, 3LP Gold Vinyl, 3LP Deluxe Red Vinyl, 2Cassette**

Personally-curated by Sara Dallin and Keren Woodward, Bananarama's 'Glorious: The Ultimate Collection' is the definitive guide to one of the most successful girl groups of all time.

Documenting their journey from the early-'80s with Siobhan Fahey, through the turn of the '90s with Jacquie O'Sullivan and into the past 30+ years as a duo, the set encompasses all of Bananarama's studio albums and then some.

"We wanted this to be a unique collection, a celebration of all the twists and turns in our career," says Sara. "We compiled endless lists of songs, album tracks and hit singles and whittled it down to forty: our favourite tracks from the past four decades."

Notable is the lack of '80s cuts; only eight songs from that decade feature on the album, representing the era proportionally with hits like *Cruel Summer, I Heard A Rumour* and *Love In The First Degree* while placing the focus firmly on Dallin and Woodward's enduring collaboration beyond the first iteration of the band.

From the past 20 years, each album is represented with four songs - Top 40 smashes like *Move In My Direction* and *Look On The Floor (Hypnotic Tango)* sit alongside album cuts including *Extraordinary*, *I'm On Fire* and *It's Gonna Be Alright*.

In spanning 1983's 'Deep Sea Skiving' to 2022's 'Masquerade', there's also dazzling re-workings of *Movin' On* and *Last Thing On My Mind* plus the between-album releases *Now Or Never*, *La La Love* and holiday cult classic, *Baby It's Christmas*.

'Glorious' is not a greatest hits; hit play expecting to find all Bananarama's charting songs and you'll be disappointed - that's what past compilations are for. This time, the focus is on the core duo as they revisit four decades of success and cast the spotlight on the recordings they're most proud of from their entire hitmaking tenure.

Within that, a deluxe bonus disc of reworked mixes is an additional treat, with a pulsing New Wave mix of *Do Not Disturb* from Krystal Klear a highlight, while the inclusion of two new songs - *Feel The Love* and *Supernova* - sees the girls cast their eyes to the future.

"Putting the music together for this project... made me realise how much we have achieved and how determined, tenacious, and hardworking we are," adds Keren - and with at least five extra tracks in the vault as outtakes from the 'Glorious' sessions alone, it surely won't be long until another new Bananarama offering arrives.

PHOTO MARK MATTOCK

DEE C LEE
JUST SOMETHING
★★★★☆

RELEASED: **March 22 *Acid Jazz***
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl, 1LP Blue Vinyl**

More than two and a half decades in the making, Dee C. Lee returns in fine form as she delivers 'Just Something' - a collection of soulful pop gems from the heart.

The 11 song set is largely written by the singer-songwriter herself, with a semi-autobiographical thread tapping into key events over the past 25 years, while also reflecting on her life overall with a warm sense of nostalgia.

Inspired by classic Motown, the single *Walk Away* reunites Dee with her former fellow Style Councillor Mick Talbot, with his distinctive piano and Wulitzer also featuring on the track *Everyday Summer*, written by her daughter, Leah Weller.

While playing from a supergroup of musicians also on her label roster, including Brand New Heavies' Simon Bartholomew, plus former James Taylor Quartet bassist Gary Crockett and guitarist Nigel Price, it makes for a sound rooted in Dee's present, while reunions with writers Michael McEvoy and Ernest McKone evoke the past, bringing to the fore her trademark soul.

One of the album's deeper moments, *Mountains* reflects upon her divorce with ex-husband Paul Weller with an endearing rawness wrapped up in Dee's luscious vocals, while tracks such as *Anything*, co-written with Paul Barry, deliver a forward-facing sense of optimism and *For Once In My Life* - the oldest song on the set, dating back to 1998 - is classic while effortlessly cool.

Also featured are two covers, Renee Geyer's *Be There In The Morning* and *I Love You*, recorded by Weldon Irvine, sitting seamlessly alongside the original material, strong in their own right and highlighting the indisputable quality of the work on offer.

Sonically, 'Just Something' is rooted in a Motown-esque soundscape throughout and, in that regard, few risks are taken, but having found her groove so perfectly this time around it's hard to imagine Dee delivering anything else.

Instead, she gathers a lifetime of experience into a body of work that serves as a reminder of her musical prowess and why she got into the business in the first place. "I wanted to make something that made people forget their problems for a while," Dee says. "I wanted to put a smile on their faces."

PHOTO BEN MEADOWS

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS

BRUCE SUDANO
TALKIN' UGLY TRUTH, TELLIN' PRETTY LIES
★★★☆☆

RELEASED: **March 1 *Purple Heart***
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl**

On a project exploring his place in a post-pandemic world, Bruce Sudano navigates life through his music on eight songs that reflect the singer-songwriter today.

Over the past half-century, the musician has made a name for himself writing tracks for superstars including his late wife Donna Summer, but his solo material is worlds away from the disco romp of *Bad Girls* (which he co-wrote), instead leaning into a sparse organic soundscape that places his vocal and lyrics at its core.

"With the album, 'Talkin' Ugly Truth, Tellin' Pretty Lies', I'm tackling the future by wrestling with the past, all while living in the present tense," he says. "Dealing with the tension and pressures of current life, the vulnerability of aging along with the denial and acceptance of its inevitabilities.

"All of the stories, poetry and philosophies set sonically in a post modern production that hints at tradition while pushing boundaries and mixing textures. It's meant to feel like a safe place to ponder complex realities..."

Central to the album is his collaboration with Valerie Simpson, *Two Bleeding Hearts*, which sees the pair take on the roles of lovers navigating a turbulent period, with a slick vocal blend that sees Sudano on the Ashford & Simpson star's level.

Opener *Better Than This* is a stripped-back ode to celebrating the little things in life, while *Cardboard World* speaks of a girl living a vagabond life.

At just eight tracks, it's a short set that sometimes misses the mark; if *Make The World Go Away* has the bare bones of a great track, the spoken word *Navigating The Unforeseen* is a standout piece, if a bit of a stumbling block on such a concise collection.

What does stand out, though, is Bruce's vocals, which are captivating and effortless, and lead the concept of the record while keeping the artist at the fore.

PHOTO AMY WATERS

GOSSIP
REAL POWER
★★★★☆

RELEASED: **March 22**
Columbia
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl, 1LP Pink Vinyl**

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

The mid-2000s saw Beth Ditto become an overnight LGBTQ+ icon on the back of the band's monster hit single *Standing In The Way Of Control* breaking into the Top 10 of the UK Singles Chart.

The American indie-rockers went on to score hits with *Listen Up!* and *Heavy Cross*, but it's been over a decade since they released their most recent LP, 'A Joyful Noise' (2012), and embarked on an extended hiatus.

Now back together, 'Real Power' marks the dawning of a new era for the group. "When we began, so much about Gossip was about running away—that was always in the music," says Ditto.

"We survived. We came from nothing, and we got the fuck out of there. And to be here 20 years later and still making music together is just incredible."

Reuniting the group with legendary producer Rick Rubin - who helmed their previous effort - the record remains typically eclectic, referencing several touchstones across its 11 songs while upholding the essence of the band at its core.

If opening number *Act Of God* has echoes of Motown, lead single *Crazy Again* taps into indie-pop territory and lets the melody lead the way with a sparse instrumental arrangement, all with the band's unmistakeable flair.

On the flipside, the title song juxtaposes guitar with buzzing electronics for a cacophony that underpins Ditto's rallying cry in support of owning your power.

Meanwhile, the funk core of *Give It Up For Love* proves the trio can turn their hand to practically anything and emerge triumphant.

Gossip's original run was patchy where success was concerned and only their two most recent albums made waves on the charts before they called it a day. This time around, however, they're on a different footing altogether and in offering up some of the strongest work of their career to date, the real power of Gossip is the magic that happens when the trio get into the studio together.

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS

VINCE FREEMAN
SCARS, GHOSTS & GLORY
★★★★☆

RELEASED: **March 22 *Kinetic***
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Gold Vinyl, 1LP White Vinyl, Cassette**

Finally arriving with his debut album, Vince Freeman's 'Scars, Ghosts & Glory' is a powerful collection of anthems celebrating the essence of life.

Opening with the aptly-titled *Powers*, the singer-songwriter - who rose to prominence back in 2012 when he made the final 40 on the inaugural series of 'The Voice UK' - delivers a symphony of self-belief with a punchy vocal and gospel undertones.

"I think that if you're told 'No' OR 'You're the wrong fit' enough times, it's hard not to start believing it. That was definitely me, and I didn't even know it," he reflects. "This all changed when I got a new record deal. Just that small thing, that 'YES' that 'You are good enough' changed me and as a result started this journey. I woke up the next morning and wrote *Powers*."

Across 12 songs produced by Paul Visser, Freeman explores his journey over the past decade, from struggling to make his artistry connect (*Blame Myself*) and feeling out of place both in the industry and the world at large (*Imposter*).

But as the record progresses the parts of the puzzle click into place and on introspective anthems like *Sun Is Shining* and the single-worthy *Real Love*, he taps into that inner strength and comes to accept and embrace the life he's built.

Although more than 10 years into his career, Freeman's a newcomer when it comes to the album releasing game and to debut with a project so raw and exposed is a risk, but 'Scars, Ghosts & Glory' is a rollercoaster ride through his experiences that takes you through the ups and downs that brings you closer to the artist at its core.

Closing with the aptly-titled *Freedom* - an anthem for letting go of the past, living in the moment and taking ownership over every mistake - there's a refreshing sense of rebirth across the record that places Vince Freeman truly as one to watch.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

SHERYL CROW
EVOLUTION
★★★☆☆

RELEASED: **March 29 *Big Machine***
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl**

At the time of the release of her last album, 'Threads' (2018), Sheryl Crow swore her record-making days were done and dusted.

But after the US star was inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame last year, she had a change of heart and this month returns with her 12th long-player 'Evolution'.

"This music and these lyrics came from sitting in the quiet and writing from a deep soul place. I said I'd never make another record, thought there was no point to it," she says of the project. "But this music comes from my soul. And I hope whoever hears this record can feel that."

Opening with the bouncy lead single *Alarm Clock*, the album plants itself in pop territory with a throwback ditty that speaks to Crow's freeing approach to making material. "Everything is more song oriented now with streaming, and making an album is a huge endeavor," she adds of the process.

"I started sending just a couple of demos to Mike [Elizondo, co-writer and producer], but the songs just kept flowing out of me and it was pretty obvious this was going to be an album."

Do It Again has a breeziness to it that's reminiscent of her '90s gems, while *Broken Record* is another pop moment that showcases Crow's knack for penning commercial hits.

Elsewhere on the set, *You Can't Change The Weather* is a guitar-led, mid-tempo with lush layered harmony across a chorus that celebrates the highs and lows of life, with piano ballad ***Don't** Walk Away* another showcase of the more delicate side to Crow's vocals.

Meanwhile, the title song - with a guitar solo from Tom Morello - speaks to the spike in AI usage worldwide and ponders a world where humans are secondary to robots and feelings become obsolete, building to a roaring crescendo that celebrates human kind.

As a body of work, 'Evolution' is quintessentially Sheryl Crow and each song holds its own as a worthwhile moment in her repertoire, even if she heads down a well-trodden path at times.

Still, three decades in and going strong - the real thrill is having Crow back making music once again.

PHOTO DOVE SHORE

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS

STARSAILOR
WHERE THE WILD THINGS GROW
★★★★☆

RELEASED: **March 22 *Townsend***
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Black Vinyl, 1LP Lilac Vinyl, Lilac Cassette, Yellow Cassette**

Reuniting with Embrace's Rick McNamara, Stairailor look to the future on their first album in seven years, 'Where The Wild Things Grow'.

Born in the wake of frontman James Walsh's divorce and crafted over the course of a global pandemic, change is central to the core of the record, which delivers some of the band's strongest work since their early 2000s albums.

The title song points to the group as they stand today, drawing on an array of influences from '70s rock while delivering the track with an ease and natural confidence that comes with more than two decades under their belts.

Opening number, the five-and-a-half-minute *Into The Wild*, proves the band are doing nothing by numbers this time around, while the single *Heavyweight* taps into the highs and lows of life in a band approaching its 25th anniversary next year.

Better Times stands out as another anthem from the set which, paired with more reflective tunes such as *After The Rain* and *Hard Love*, showcases the spectrum of the group's musicality and their continuing desire to evolve and push their sound further.

The single, *Dead On The Money* - with its double-meaning title - is destined to become a singalong moment in their live shows having already proved to be a fan-favourite since its release.

Come closing number *Hanging In The Balance*, Walsh is at his most reflective, singing *'If we hold on to tight we'll suffocate it / If we give it too much space we'll just erase it'* and opening up a world of emotions that have run through the band's most recent recordings and helped lure longtime fans back into Starsailor's musical universe.

Arriving on the back of the 20-year anniversary of their debut album, 'Love Is Here', Starsailor's gaze has moved firmly from the past and onto the future - and while the lessons of days gone by may echo through their lyrics, they serve as pointers for living as the band steps into tomorrow with one of their best albums yet!

PHOTO ANDY EARL

SARAH JANE MORRIS
THE SISTERHOOD
★★★★☆

RELEASED: **March 8 *Fallen Angel***
FORMATS: **CD, Standard Black Vinyl**

Celebrating female artists and visionaries that have proven inspirations throughout her life and career, Sarah Jane Morris' 'The Sisterhood' finds her at the pinnacle of creativity.

A representation of her musical foundations, the 10 songs on the record see the chart-topping singer pay tribute to Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Miriam Makeba, Aretha Franklin, Janis Joplin, Joni Mitchell, Rickie Lee Jones, Annie Lennox and Kate Bush.

"For more than 20 years I have been thinking about projects to celebrate women and our contribution to the history of song. This, at last, is it," says Sarah Jane. "These are my ten singers, my essential lodestars. With these stories I tell my own, acknowledge my musical tutelage and identify the women who mean so much to me."

Lead single *Jazz Side Of The Road* is a soulful, mid-tempo number capturing the essence of two-time Grammy Award winner Jones, with Morris' trademark contralto vocals as arrestingly impressive as when she traded off with Jimmy Sommerville on The Communards' *Don't Leave Me This Way*.

Since then, she's recorded 15 albums with this lockdown project, conceived alongside husband Mark Pulsford, a labour of love that oozes passion while showcasing her creativity on tracks like *Rimbaud Of Suburbia*, which juxtaposes Bush's creativity with that of the titular French poet.

The title song is an homage to Franklin, delivered with a depth of passion that would impress the Queen of Soul herself, while *Couldn't Be Without* offers a more plainly biographical narrative of Smith's life.

Closing number *Miss Makeba* - a collaboration with the Soweto Gospel Choir - makes for a spectacular finale from a body of work that brings Morris' artistic journey full circle for a true embodiment of the essence of sisterhood.

She adds of the set: "This album is dedicated to all my musical sisters, to those who went before and to those still making music. Thank you for blazing the trail, for fighting for us all with your irresistible talent and your passionate resolve."

PHOTO RICCARDO PICCIRILLO

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RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS

GIRLS ALOUD
WHAT WILL THE NEIGHBOURS SAY?
★★★★★
RELEASED: **March 8 *Polydor***
FORMATS: **3CD, 1LP Blue Vinyl, 1LP Picture Disc**

On the heels of the 20th anniversary reissue of their iconic debut, Girls Aloud's second album is revisited with a host of rarities, unreleased demos and exclusive remixes.

The triple-disc set boasts the UK version of the album with 14 previously unreleased tracks including three Girls Aloud numbers never heard before, all produced by Xenomania, including their 'lost' single, the band's cover of the Chris Isaac classic *Wicked Game*.

Plus two new songs that didn't make the final cut, *Disco Bunny* and *Baby When You Go*, have also gone unheard until now and are a real treat for fans.

Classic B-sides such as *Androgynous Girls* and *History* appear alongside rare TV performance edits of the hits, a sparkling selection of the album's attendant remixes, and Girls Aloud's superb covers from this era, including Blondie's *Hanging On The Telephone* and Chaka Khan's *I'm Every Woman*.

Additionally, the LP is available for the first time on vinyl, as a sky-blue LP and a store-exclusive picture disc, adding to the group's collection on wax.

A great pop record in its own right and a standout reissue with plenty to get stuck into.

SHEENA EASTON
TODO ME RECUERDA A TI
★★☆☆☆
RELEASED: **March 29 *Cherry Pop***
FORMATS: **1LP Blue Vinyl**

For the first time ever, Sheena Easton's 1984 Spanish-language album 'Todo Me Recuerda A Ti' returns to vinyl.

Remastered from the original master tapes, the LP includes the Grammy-winning duet with Mexican teen star Luis Miguel, *Me Gustas Tal Como Eres*, as well as Spanish versions of her classic hits *Telefone*, *Morning Train (9 To 5)* and *We've Got Tonight* (with Spanish superstar Dyango).

The LP established Sheena's star status in Latin America, where it became a smash hit and she maintains a loyal fanbase to this day. Although it made no noise in the UK, the reissue as part of an extended series coincides with the album's 40th anniversary and is a worthy addition to a collection that focuses on the star's EMI catalogue.

With refreshed artwork and inner sleeves, it's a nice pressing. A few rarities may have made 'Todo Me Recuerda A Ti' an easier sell, but for fans and completists it'll no doubt find a place in their collections.

OMD
ATMOSPHERICS & GREATEST HITS AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL
★★★★★
RELEASED: **March 29 *Live Here Now***
FORMATS: **2CD, 4CD, 3LP Orange Vinyl**

A show comprising two stunning sets - the atmospheric along with some rarities, followed by a celebration of their hit singles spanning 40 years - OMD's new live album sees the group at their very best.

Arriving during a purple patch for the synth-poppers, the 2022 recording from their London show collects over 20 tracks and spotlights various components of the band's sound, from their bold sonic experimentations to their classic chart hits.

A 2CD edition neatly collects the sets with one per disc, while the 3LP orange vinyl edition is a little trickier, with three sides of vinyl for each. The latter edition comes in a gatefold sleeve with a booklet.

With its arrival coinciding with the European leg of OMD's 'Bauhaus Staircase Tour', it's an opportune moment to look to the past, while highlighting OMD, over four decades into their career, are still at the top of their game.

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | **REISSUES** | COMPILATIONS

WHAM!
FANTASTIC; MAKE IT BIG

★★★☆☆

RELEASED: **March 22 *Sony***
FORMATS: **1LP Black Vinyl, 1LP Red Vinyl, Blu-Ray Audio; 1LP Black Vinyl, 1LP White Vinyl, Blu-Ray Audio**

Following their hit 'Echoes From The Edge Of Heaven' singles compilation, Wham!'s first two albums finally return to vinyl this month.

'Fantastic' saw a young George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley make their mark on the pop world with a run of hits including *Wham Rap! (Enjoy What You Do)*, *Young Guns (Go For It)* and the iconic *Club Tropicana*, making the duo household names.

Meanwhile, its follow-up took them to the top of the global charts, delivering smashes such as *Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go*, *Careless Whisper* and *Freedom*, all of which hit the No. 1 spot.

For the first time since their initial release, both albums return to vinyl with a pair of coloured pressings, featuring the classic records in their original configurations, along with standard black editions.

Neither single disc comes with additional content, however the audio has been remastered and the Blu-Ray versions include 96/24 hi-res stereo mixes of the original recordings and Dolby Atmos spatial audio, along with a selection of bonus tracks in both Atmos and stereo.

Coinciding with the duo's 40th anniversary, it's a joy to finally see Wham! get their dues.

CLIMIE FISHER
COMING IN FOR THE KILL

★★★★☆

RELEASED: **March 29 *Cherry Red***
FORMATS: **4CD**

Clocking in at four discs with a massive 38 bonus tracks, Climie Fisher's 'Coming In For The Kill' is the subject of a massive new box set.

Originally released in 1989, the band's second album delivered the singles *Facts Of Love*, *Fire On The Ocean* and *It's Not Supposed To Be That Way* and ultimately became their final studio LP.

For the new set, the original 10 tracks from the record appear alongside B-sides, remixes, edits, alternate versions, demo recordings and instrumentals, 16 of which have never been released.

All tracks have been remastered using the original master tapes for a superior sound experience and the set comes packaged with a 28-page booklet that features lyrics, a discography, rare photos, as well as comprehensive musician and producer credits.

An additional disc of video content would have been the cherry on top, but with their hit debut 'Everything' set for the same treatment soon it's a must-have for fans.

MADONNA
CELEBRATION

★★☆☆☆

RELEASED: **March 2 *Warner***
FORMATS: **4LP Black Vinyl**

For the first time since its original 2009 release, Madonna's 'Celebration' compilation returns to vinyl.

In line with her 40th anniversary tour of the same name, the four-disc set encompasses the Queen of Pop's entire career, from her '80s self-titled debut through to 2008's 'Hard Candy', boasting an impressive 36 songs from her repertoire.

Also included are the new cuts, *Celebration* and *Revolver*, the former of which was a UK Top 3 hit upon its release.

Fans have long been calling for a repress of the rare compilation, but at a point in Madonna's career where she's looking explicitly to the past, and with another three albums of new material - and a wealth of standalone releases - to mine from since its release, it's unfortunate she didn't compile a new retrospective.

In light of a tour that brings together chart smashes with deeper cuts from her catalogue, a release with a similar formula could have given the iconic performer another hit record while introducing audiences to her lesser-known works.

The positives: 'Celebration' is a fine singles collection that brings together Madonna's most popular tracks from across the decades - if 15 years out of date.

ELECTRIBE 101
ELECTRIBAL MEMORIES
★★★★★
RELEASED: **March 15 *Demon***
FORMATS: **4CD, 1LP Black Vinyl**

Two years after finally releasing their 'lost' second album, Electribe 101's classic debut finally gets a deluxe reissue worthy of the early-'90s gem.

Featuring five hit singles - *Tell Me When The Fever Ended*, *Talking With Myself*, *You're Walking*, *Lipstick On My Lover* and their incredible cover of Odyssey's *Inside Out* - the LP marked the first and only release from Billie Ray Martin and co. during their original run, with a fusion of soul and house that gave them a sound all of their own.

Featuring the original tracklist along with two additional discs of bonus content - crucial remixes, extended versions, radio edits and original band demos - it's a comprehensive look back on a body of work that would influence the sound of the decade going forward.

Compiled by club culture historian Bill Brewster with new sleeve notes by Billie Ray Martin, a rapturous essay by Pete Paphides and original band photography from the era, it's a lovingly-curated set that digs deep into the archive for a handful of otherwise lost gems recorded after the original album sessions, while also spotlighting iconic mixes from the likes of Frankie Knuckles and Larry Heard.

With a standard vinyl edition also on offer - its first repress since the original release - it's a superb offering from one of the great house acts of the '90s.

PAUL YOUNG
NO PARLEZ
★★★★☆
RELEASED: **March 15 *Demon***
FORMATS: **2CD, Blu-Ray Audio**

The chart-topping debut album from Paul Young, 'No Parlez', is reissued for its 40th anniversary with a bonus disc of additional content.

One of the groundbreaking albums of 1983, it spent 119 weeks on the UK Albums Chart and featured three Top 5 singles: *Wherever I Lay My Hat (That's My Home)*, *Come Back And Stay* and *Love Of The Common People*.

The new reissue includes the original tracklist along with the key 7" versions and extended mixes, as well as three further tracks, two of which did not appear on the 1983 album and one that was added to the cassette and CD formats.

Also on offer is a Blu-Ray audio edition boasting eight different audio mixes, including a brand new immersive Dolby Atmos Mix, a 5.1 mix, a new stereo mix and much more.

While the extra tracks are nothing that hasn't already been released, it makes for a neat collection encompassing the entire era and bringing back to the fore the most successful release of Young's career.

KYLIE MINOGUE
BODY LANGUAGE
★★★☆☆
RELEASED: **March 8**
Parlophone
FORMATS: **1LP Red Blooded Vinyl**

The ninth album from pop icon Kylie Minogue makes its vinyl debut as it celebrates its 20th anniversary.

Featuring the chart-topping single *Slow*, plus the hits *Red Blooded Woman* and *Chocolate*, the LP followed the release of 2000's 'Light Years' and 'Fever' in 2001, and 'Body Language' showcases a transformation from dance-pop with influences of synth-pop, electroclash, R&B and hip-hop.

It was these three albums that transformed Kylie into the singular-named superstar that she is known and loved by today, with the album pointing towards her enduring evolution, over 15 years into her career.

Presented on 'red blooded' vinyl, this anniversary release is a single-format affair, deviating from recent releases that have offered up a variety of formats. With a lack of additional content, it's tailored exclusively to vinyl collectors and completists, with the presentation and the music itself enough to warrant a shot.

Not the strongest Kylie reissue of recent years, but to have 'Body Language' finally on wax is a treat in itself.

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | **REISSUES** | COMPILATIONS

KIRSTY MACCOLL
KITE, ELECTRIC LANDLADY
★★★☆☆
RELEASED: **March 8 *Demon***
FORMATS: **1LP Black Vinyl**

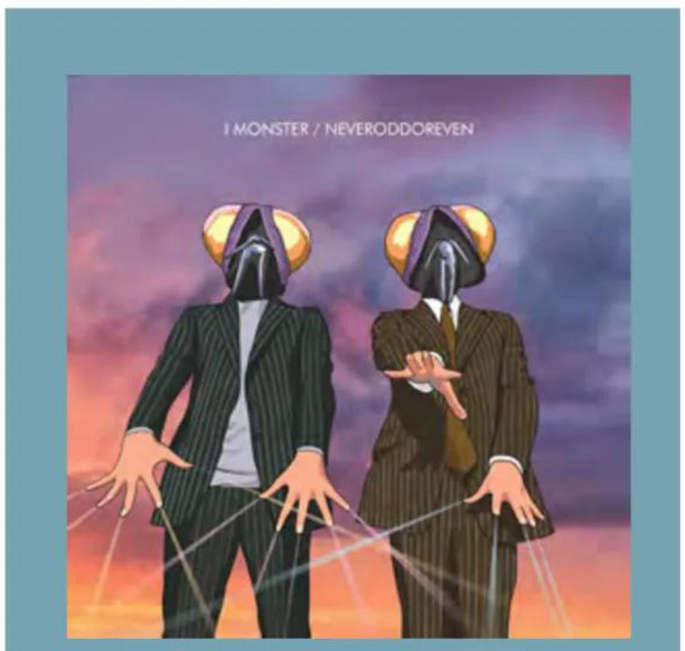
The breakthrough second and third albums from the late Kirsty MacColl are reissued on Half Speed mastered vinyl as the latest from her repertoire to be revisited.

'Kite' arrived in the spring of 1989, a whole decade after the singer-songwriter had released her first single, and seven years after her last album, 'Desperate Character' (1982).

In the interim, she had a Top 10 with her harmony and jangle-drenched version of Billy Bragg's *A New England* in 1985, an evergreen Christmas hit, 1987's *Fairytale Of New York*, with her sophomore release fusing country, pop and ballads while observing fame, love and modern life.

Its follow-up added Cuban and Latin American flavours to the mix for a more worldly set, driven by collaborations with drummer José Mangual, Jr., trumpeter Angel Hernandez, timbalero Mark Quinones and bassist Sal Cuevas, who all joined her band.

Appearing in their original configurations with no additional content, both LPs have been remastered at Half Speed from the original analogue tapes by Phil Kinrade at AIR studios, with a renewed clarity of sound that once again emphasises MacColl's greatness.



I, MONSTER
NEVERODDOREVEN
★★★☆☆
RELEASED: **March 29 *Dharma***
FORMATS: **CD, 2LP Splatter Vinyl**

Electronic duo I, Monster's second album turns 20 with an extended collection of rare and never-before-heard material.

Originally released in 2004, 'Neveroddoreven' saw the group reach an international audience when its song *The Blue Wrath* was used in the opening of the 2004 comedy 'Shaun Of The Dead' and appeared on the movie's soundtrack.

For the new release, the album is presented as a double gatefold splatter vinyl edition featuring the original set plus a bonus disc of material unearthed from the album sessions and three brand new tracks.

A single CD version includes the original album, the three new tracks plus the acoustic version of *Daydream In Blue*.

With a 'Remodelled' edition of the LP arriving a year later, it's a shame both weren't packaged together for the ultimate celebration of the era, but that being said the additional content is a neat bonus and, two decades on, the material remains strikingly fresh today.

RELEASE RADAR

ALBUMS | REISSUES | COMPILATIONS

NOW YEARBOOK EXTRA 1990

★★★☆☆

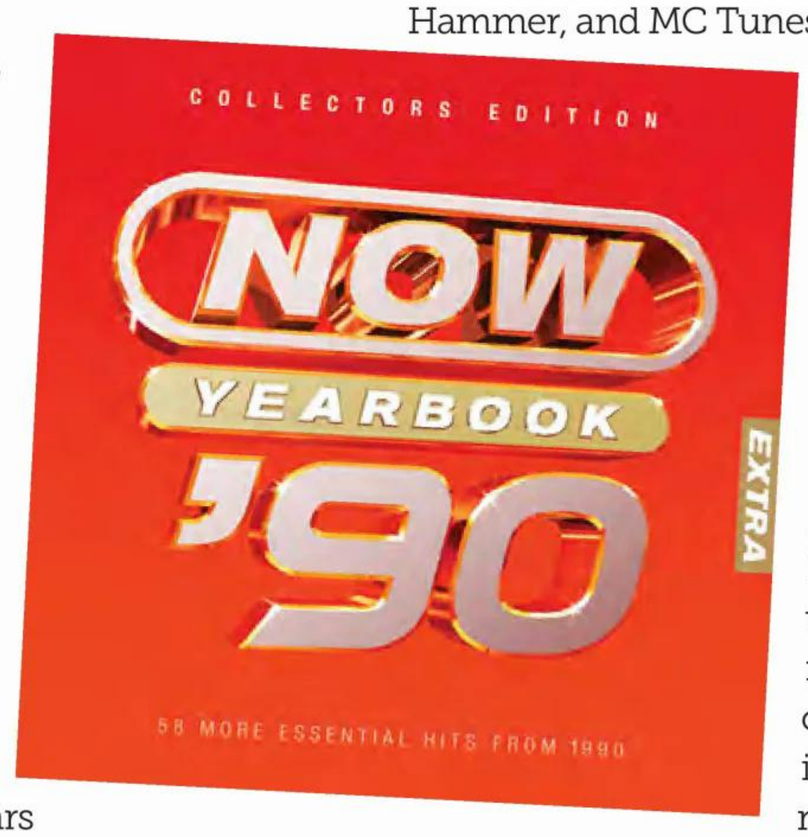
RELEASED: **March 15 *Sony***

FORMATS: **3CD**

Collecting 58 more essential singles from the turn of the decade, NOW's 'Yearbook' series revisits 1990 once more.

George Michael's defining *Freedom! '90* is an apt opener for a set that brings together the best of the '80s - Duran Duran, Belinda Carlisle, Tears For Fears - with a new generation of hitmakers such as Betty Boo, Technotronic and The Farm.

Showcasing a breadth of genres, alternative club tracks from The Soup Dragons, The Beloved and Primal Scream sit alongside soul influenced beats from Innocence, Soul II Soul with Kym Mazelle and The Chimes. There's also pop & hip-hop/rap crossover moments courtesy of LL Cool J, M.C. Hammer, and MC Tunes and 808 State, plus rock from Poison, Billy Idol, Cher and the Pretenders.



Closing with 1990's Christmas chart-topper - *Saviour's Day* from Cliff Richard - on the back of a notable string of '60s covers, it makes for a neat companion to the original 1990 'Yearbook' and continues to explore an evolving pop landscape that leaned into the past whilst looking firmly to the future.

NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL JUKEBOX CLASSICS

★★★☆☆

RELEASED: **March 15 *Sony***

FORMATS: **4CD**

Stepping back in time and embracing the nostalgia and magic of the '50s and '60s, NOW's jukebox celebrates a golden age of rock & roll, doo-wop and soul.

Across 100 iconic tracks, the set brings together staples from the era such as *Tutti Frutti*, *Johnny B Goode*, *C'mon Everybody*, *Great Balls Of Fire* and *Let's Twist Again*.

Staples from all-time greats like Elvis Presley, Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons, Dusty Springfield, Petula Clark and Roy Orbison showcase the biggest names of the era at the peak of their powers, while cuts including *The Locomotion*, *The Shoop Shoop Song (It's In His Kiss)* and *It's My Party* - which would later become hits for Kylie Minogue, Cher, and Dave Stewart and Barbara Gaskin, respectively, demonstrate the enduring influence of the material on offer.

Heading back a couple of decades beyond our usual remit, it's not bursting with so many universally recognisable hits as the usual NOW compilations, but with a truly comprehensive tracklist 'Jukebox Classics' does well in representing a transformative era in music that would influence the pop landscape for decades to come.

VARIOUS ARTISTS TIM'S LISTENING PARTY

★★★★☆

RELEASED: **March 15 *Demon***

FORMATS: **2LP Green Vinyl, 4CD**

'Tim's Listening Party' together highlights from the 1,278 Listening Parties that took place online during the pandemic.

The Charlatans frontman started his Listening Parties in March 2020 in response to the first national lockdown and garnered an impressive online following of music fans from across the world.

The parties themselves were an eclectic mix of genres and eras and the first 'Tim's Listening Party' compilation reflects that with Suede, New Order, The Chemical Brothers, Sparks, The Breeders, The Lovely Eggs, John Grant, Joan As Police Woman and The Charlatans.

Within the top 100 listening parties, artists reflected on the compilation include Iron Maiden, Liam Gallagher, Paul McCartney, John Lennon, The Libertines, MGMT, Dexys Midnight Runners, The Specials and Belle & Sebastian.

With a total 62 tracks on the CD edition and 24 on the vinyl, it's a set that merely skims the surface of the vast series, but packaged with an interview with Tim detailing the cultural importance of the Listening Party during lockdown, a neat tie-in to the social media phenomenon.

CAUGHT live

THE ADDAMS FAMILY – THE MUSICAL COMEDY

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2024
THE LONDON PALLADIUM
★★★★☆

If ever there was a performer perfect for the role of Addams Family matriarch Morticia it's Michelle Visage.

The former Seduction star turned 'RuPaul's Drag Race' legend took to the stage for two nights (and one matinee) only at The London Palladium, starring alongside Ramin Karimloo as Morticia's husband Gomez.

In a story centred on the culture clash that ensues when couple's daughter Wednesday bring's her strikingly ordinary new boyfriend and his parents over for dinner, the plot is notably thin, but laugh out loud comedy and catchy songs more than make up for those shortcomings.

Visage flipped between letting loose one liners and leading musical numbers with soaring vocals, proving that 35 years since the US band released its debut album 'Nothing Matters Without Love' (1989), she remains in fine voice.

With a season of 'Strictly Come Dancing' under her belt - along with a stint with Steps for *Heartbreak In This City* - she delivered on the dance moves in equal measure, especially during a fiery tango with Karimloo during the final act.

The leading man, it must be said, stole the show with the most indisputably impressive vocal from the ensemble, proving the perfect pairing for Visage, while national treasure Lesley Joseph got one of the loudest applauses from the crowd when she emerged on stage for the first time as Grandma.

Staged more as a concert than a theatrical spectacle, the scenery was minimal and the sets stripped back,, placing the action front and centre with the focus on the performers and their delivery - a refreshing change from the often-overblown West End production values.

Wednesday's infatuation with her beige beau still didn't make much sense *but* it did highlight the quality of the comedy and musical aspects of the show which, thanks to a superb cast, made for an enjoyable evening.

PHOTOS PAMELA RAITH

ZARA LARSSON
VENUS TOUR
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024
ROUNDHOUSE, LONDON
★★★★☆

WORDS FABIO MAGNOCAVALLO **PHOTOS** COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

Over the course of the past decade, Zara Larsson has evolved from being a pop princess in her native Sweden to a global success.

From multi-platinum singles, hit albums, major collabs and countless awards, the 26-year-old has been embraced at large. Releasing her fourth studio album, 'Venus', last month, Larsson is currently embarking on a European tour of the same name and taking audiences on a journey through her career to date.

For the first of two London shows at Camden's iconic Roundhouse, Larsson opened her set with the title track from her new album. A singer with pipes, the performer made sure the crowd knew her mic was on before tapping into more energetic, dancey numbers by delivering standout vocals to the ethereal, synthy bop.

Equally as good at choreography and whipping her blonde hair as she is as a singer, Larsson proved she's a triple threat who deserves more attention. Performing to a sold-out crowd of 2,500 screaming fans who have likely fallen in love with her through her monstrous smash hits that have dominated streaming platforms and radio playlists, the real star quality in Larsson is that she can do all her songs justice live. From *I Would Like* and *Never Forget You* to *Ruin My Life* and her chart-topping single *Symphony* with British band Clean Bandit, Larsson's set was met with the crowd singing along to every word and reflected on her beastly singles collection that continues to grow.

Her latest track *You Love Who You Love* segueing straight into the bold production of *Ain't My Fault* was a big moment, as well as the show's three-song encore: *On My Love*, *Lush Life* and *Can't Tame Her*.

A personal highlight was the 'Venus' album cut *Escape*, which has the potential to become one of Larsson's most noteworthy hidden gems if it doesn't become a single.

If there were just a couple of things lacking from the set, it was the songs *Soundtrack* and *Memory Lane*. Other than that, Larsson remains at the top of her game as both a recording artist and live performer.

RELEASE RADAR

Coming soon...

NEW MUSIC

ARIANA GRANDE
ETERNAL SUNSHINE

RELEASED:
March 8 *Republic*
FORMATS: **CD (4 Alternate Covers), 1LP Coloured Vinyl (4 Alternate Covers)**

The seventh studio album from the US superstar - her first in four years - featuring the smash hit single, *yes, and?*

THE LIBERTINES
ALL QUIET ON THE EASTERN ESPLANADE

RELEASED:
March 8 Virgin *EMI*
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Red Vinyl, 1LP Picture Disc Vinyl, 2LP White Vinyl**

Their first studio release in nearly nine years, following 'Anthems for Doomed Youth' (2015), the 11-track LP sees the band at their most united.

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE
EVERYTHING I THOUGHT IT WAS

Released:
March 15 *RCA*
Formats: CD, 1LP Black Vinyl

His first studio release in six years, following 'Man Of The Woods' (2018), featuring the lead single *Selfish*.

LENNY KRAVITZ
BLUE ELECTRIC LIGHT

RELEASED:
March 15 *BMG*
FORMATS: **CD, Deluxe CD, 2LP Blue and Pink Vinyl, 2LP Picture Disc**

Largely self-written and performed, the 12th LP from the superstar continues to showcase his mastery of deep-soul rock 'n roll.

TEXAS AND SPOONER OLDHAM
THE MUSCLE SHOALS SESSIONS

RELEASED: **March 29 *PIAS***
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Green Vinyl**

Twelve of Texas' greatest hits and two covers reimagined and laid bare at the renowned 'Fame Recording Studio' in Muscle Shoals, Alabama, during the summer of 2022.

THE FEELING
SAN VITO

RELEASED:
April 12 *Little Word*
FORMATS: **CD, Deluxe CD, 1LP Black Vinyl, 1LP Blue Vinyl**

The brand new album from the 2000s hitmakers includes their latest radio hit, *The Right Wrong*.

TAYLOR SWIFT'S
THE TORTURED POETS DEPARTMENT

RELEASED:
April 19 *Republic*
FORMATS: **CD, 2LP White Vinyl, Cassette**

The 11th studio album from the US superstar is the follow-up to 2022 LP 'Midnights' and clocks in at 16 songs.

UB40
UB45

RELEASED:
April 19 *SoNo*
FORMATS:
CD, Cassette

Celebrating their 45th anniversary, the new LP features brand new songs plus re-recordings of some of UB40's most beloved hits.

PET SHOP BOYS
NONETHELESS

RELEASED: **April 26 *Parlophone***
FORMATS: **CD, 2CD, 1LP Black Vinyl, 2LP White Vinyl (Inc. Bonus EP), 1LP Zoetrope Vinyl**

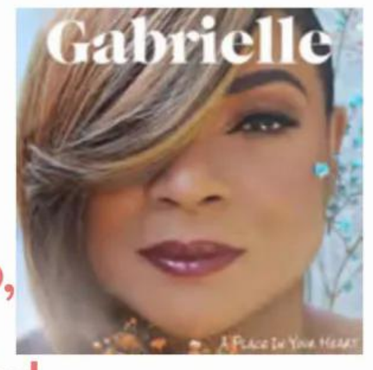
The 16th album from Neil Tennant and Chris Lowe, produced by James Ford, featuring the lively lead single, *Loneliness*.

SIA
REASONABLE WOMAN

RELEASED:
May 3 *Atlantic*
FORMATS:
CD, 1LP Pink Vinyl, 1LP Quartz Vinyl, 1LP Tangerine Vinyl

The first album from the Australian pop star in eight years, including the lead single *Gimme Love* and Kylie Minogue collaboration *Dance Alone*.

GABRIELLE
A PLACE IN YOUR HEART



RELEASED:
May 10 *BMG*
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Transparent Curacao Blue Vinyl**

The follow-up to her Top 5 covers collection, the soul superstar returns with her first collection of original material in six years.

SHAZNAY LEWIS
PAGES

RELEASED:
May 17 *1.9.7.5*
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP White Vinyl**

The first solo album in 20 years from the All Saints legend, featuring the singles *Miracle* and *Kiss Of Life*.

CROWDED HOUSE
GRAVITY STAIRS

RELEASED:
May 31 *BMG*
FORMATS: **CD, 1LP Blue Vinyl**

The eighth album from the New Zealand group featuring the brand new single *Oh Hi*.

LOOKING BACK

ABBA
WATERLOO
RELEASED:
April 5 *UMC*
FORMATS: **2LP Black Vinyl, 3x7" Coloured Vinyl Singles Box Set, 3x7" Picture Disc Vinyl Singles, 10" Vinyl Single**

The classic album featuring the 1974 Eurovision Song Contest-winning anthem, half-speed mastered by Miles Showell at Abbey Road.

GARBAGE
BLEED LIKE ME
RELEASED:
April 5 *BMG*
FORMATS: **2CD, 1LP Grey Vinyl**

The 2005 album revisited ahead of its 20th anniversary with a selection of B-sides, remixes and demos.

NO DOUBT
THE SINGLES 1992-2003
RELEASED:
April 5 *UMC*
FORMATS: **2LP Black Vinyl, 2LP Orange Vinyl, 2LP Silver Vinyl**

Reissue of the iconic band's classic singles collection to coincide with their reunion sets at Coachella!

MANIC STREET PREACHERS
LIFEBLOOD 20
RELEASED:
April 12 *Sony*
FORMATS: **3CD, 2LP Black Vinyl**

Twentieth anniversary bookset featuring original 12 album tracks, plus B-sides, demos, outtakes and two brand new remixes.

BELINDA CARLISLE
REAL
RELEASED:
April 19 *Demon*
FORMATS: **1LP Half-Speed Master Black Vinyl, 1LP Picture Disc Vinyl**

The fifth solo album from The Go-Go's star gets the reissue treatment with a pair of vinyl pressings in line with previous releases.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
DISCO DISCHARGE; CLASSIC DISCO; DISCO FEVER USA
RELEASED: **April 19 *Demon***
FORMATS **2CD, 2LP Orange Vinyl; 2CD, 2LP White Vinyl**

The latest instalments of Demon's 'Disco Discharge' series of themed compilations of full-length, extended disco originals.

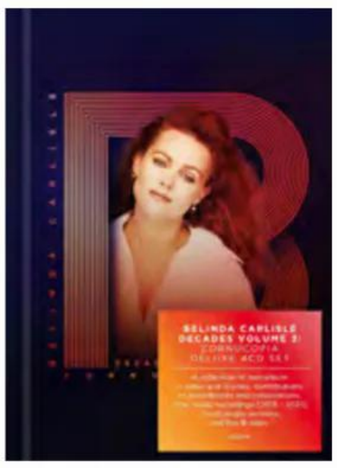
ORBITAL
GREEN ALBUM
RELEASED:
April 19 *London*
FORMATS: **2CD, 4CD, 2LP Black Vinyl, 2LP Green and Red Vinyl, 4LP Black Vinyl, Red Cassette**

The seminal debut album is revisited and expanded to coincide with the band's 'Green Album' UK tour.

TINA TURNER
WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT (30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION)
RELEASED:
April 26 *Rhino*
FORMATS: **2CD, 4CD+DVD, 1LP Black Vinyl**

Marking three decades since its release, this expanded set includes a suite of additional material from the late Queen of Rock & Roll.

BELINDA CARLISLE
DECADES VOLUME 3: CORNUCOPIA
RELEASED:
May 3 *Demon*
FORMATS: **4CD Media Book**



A collection of non-album A-sides and B-sides, contributions to soundtracks and compilations, new studio recordings, plus 7" single versions and live B-sides.

KEANE
HOPES AND FEARS (20TH ANNIVERSARY)
RELEASED:
May 10 *UMC*
FORMATS: **3CD, 2LP Live Edition, 1LP Galaxy Vinyl, 2LP Coloured Vinyl, Box Set (3CD + 7" Single)**

Anniversary reissue including the newly remastered album, previously unreleased demos, B-sides and rarities, plus brand new sleeve notes from the band and original team.

For all the latest RETROPOP releases visit RETROPOPMAGAZINE.COM

CHEERS THEN

Celebrating the release of 'Glorious: The Ultimate Collection' and three shows at the London Palladium, revisit four decades of **Bananarama**!

1 What language was Bananarama's first single *Aie a Mwana* performed in?

2 Sara and Siobhan were studying what course at the London College of Fashion when they met?

3 An article in which magazine alerted The Specials' Terry Hall to Bananarama?

4 Which writing and production duo did Bananarama work primarily with on their first three albums?

5 The music video for *Shy Boy* was directed by which Ultravox members?

6 Which actor did Bananarama consider making the subject of *Robert De Niro's Waiting...*

7 Stock Aitken Waterman first collaborated with Bananarama on which US No. 1 hit?

8 Bananarama achieved three charity No. 1s - can you name them?

9 Which track did Bananarama perform at the 1988 BRIT Awards?

10 Bananarama's first single with Jacquie O'Sullivan was a re-recorded version of which 'WOW!' (1987) track?

11 Lananeeneenoonoo - who collaborated with Bananarama on *Help!* - starred which three comedians?

12 What's the title of Bananarama's only album with Jacquie?

13 How did Pete Waterman describe the sound of 'Please Yourself' (1993)?

14 *Last Thing On My Mind* later became a hit single for which British group?

15 Bananarama's seventh album, 'Ultra Violet' (1995), was given which alternate title in Japan?

16 The lead single from 'Exotica' (2001) was a cover of which George Michael classic?

17 *Look On The Floor* features an interpolation of which '80s Italo disco classic?

18 'Viva' (2009) marked the beginning of Bananarama's long-running collaboration with which producer?

19 *Love In Stereo* - from 2019's 'In Stereo' - was written and originally recorded (though never released) by which British girl group?

20 What's the name of the dog that stars in the music video for *Masquerade*?

● ***'Glorious: The Ultimate Collection' is out March 8 on London. Bananarama play the London Palladium on April 3, 4 and 6. Tickets are on sale now.***

ANSWERS: **1** Swahili; **2** Journalism; **3** The Face; **4** Jolley & Swain; **5** Midge Ure and Chris Cross; **6** Al Pacino; **7** Venus; **8** *Do They Know It's Christmas?* (Band Aid and Band Aid II) and *Let It Be* (Ferry Aid); **9** *Love In The First Degree*; **10** *I Want You Back*; **11** Jennifer Saunders, Dawn French and Kathy Burke; **12** 'Pop Life'; **13** ABBA-Banana; **14** Steps; **15** 'I Found Love'; **16** *Careless Whisper*; **17** My Mine - *Hypnotic Tango*; **18** Ian Masterson; **19** Sugababes; **20** David Bowie

PHOTO PENELOPE CAMPBELL AND WILL MARSH

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LIGHTNING SEEDS

35 YEARS GREATEST HITS TOUR

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SAT 09 ***NORWICH*** THE WATERFRONT
THU 14 ***NOTTINGHAM*** ROCK CITY
FRI 15 ***CARDIFF*** TRAMSHED
THU 21 ***BRISTOL*** O2 ACADEMY
FRI 22 ***OXFORD*** O2 ACADEMY
SAT 23 ***BEXHILL*** DE LA WARR PAVILION
THU 28 ***NEWCASTLE*** BOILERSHOP
FRI 29 ***GLASGOW*** GARAGE
SAT 30 ***DUBLIN*** ACADEMY

DECEMBER 2024

SUN 01 ***BELFAST*** LIMELIGHT
THU 05 ***MANCHESTER*** ALBERT HALL
FRI 06 ***LEEDS*** BECKETT STUDENTS' UNION
SAT 07 ***LIVERPOOL*** OLYMPIA
THU 12 ***CAMBRIDGE*** JUNCTION
FRI 13 ***LONDON*** O2 FORUM KENTISH TOWN
SAT 14 ***WOLVERHAMPTON*** WULFRUN HALL

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sat	06	april	the fire station	sunderland	uk
mon	08	april	brudenell social club	leeds	uk
tue	09	april	concorde 2	brighton	uk

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